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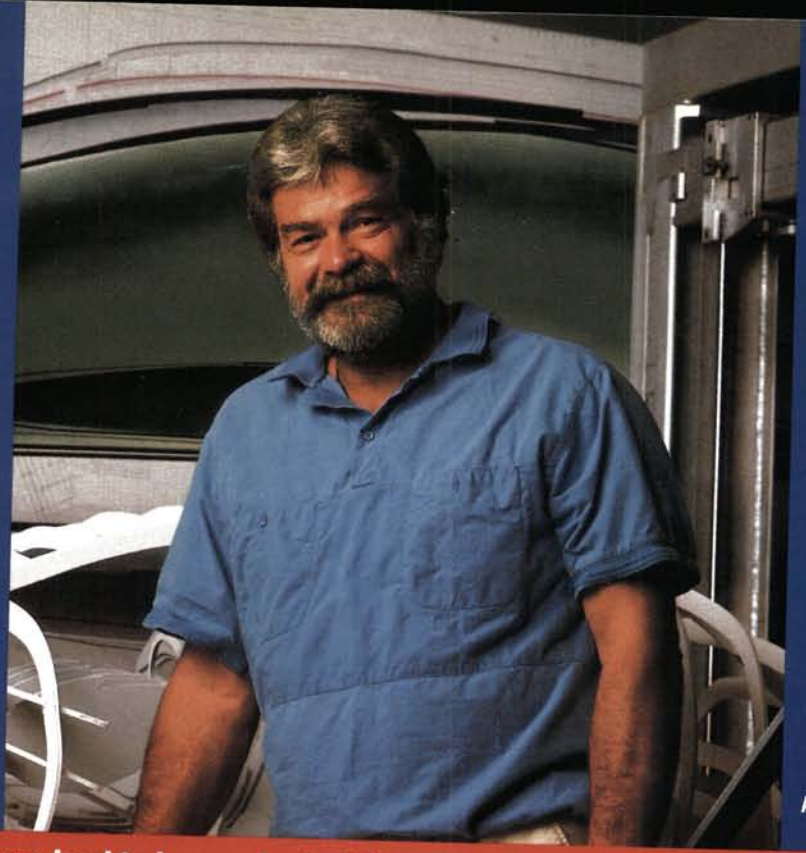

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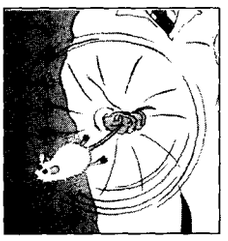

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CORRESPONDENCE

Double vision

To the editors:

Joseph Brodsky, writing about the "newer meaning of treason" ("Collector's Item," April 20), says that no one—or, to be fair, no one he knows—reads both the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *London Review of Books*. Much of his piece is about Kim Philby, who subscribed to both papers. But then he was a double agent.

MARY-KAY WILMERS
London, England

The writer is an editor of the *London Review of Books*.

To the editors:

Just one (blissfully concise) rumination on Joseph Brodsky's overwritten essay on Kim Philby:

Huh?

JORGE AMADOR
Forest Grove, Pennsylvania

Unam, sanctam...

To the editors:

In attempting to demonstrate that Pat Buchanan is "profoundly at odds with the teachings of his Church on a host of social issues," Paul Elie ("Ex Cathedra," April 6) presents a sampling of that "host" that serves only to underscore the hollowness of his claim.

First, he tries to show that the Church, unlike Buchanan, supports women's "parity with men in fact as well as in rights," while maintaining that "marriage and motherhood are fundamental to women's particular nature"—yet isn't that very belief one of the primary forces behind women's subjugation? Didn't the civil rights opponents of the '60s often refer to the "particular nature" of blacks in justifying their racism? Elie wisely skirts the Church's refusal to ordain women as priests, since addressing the issue would necessarily exhibit Catholicism's deeply ingrained misogyny, and he omits the questions of abortion and birth control altogether—two very pertinent questions concerning women's rights, and two questions to which Buchanan and the Vatican give identical answers.

Also, Elie portrays the Church as tolerant of homosexuality, a strange claim given the Vatican's line that homosexual acts are essentially "disordered." He tries to retreat from that Buchanan-like position by citing the Vatican's statement that homosexuals' "culpability will be judged prudently," but the belief that homosexuals are culpable is precisely that which fuels intolerance, and which, in turn, leads to the "violent malice" toward homosexuals that the Church must condemn in order to save face.

Both Catholics and Republicans will need much more than a few semantic sleights of hand before they can legitimately divorce themselves from Pat Buchanan and his bigotry.

J. C. FRANCO
Boulder, Colorado

To the editors:

It is an old tradition on the journalistic left that the putative teachings of the Holy Mother Church are to be respected only if, and so far as, they may be used to discredit conservative Catholic politicians. On all other occasions, whatever the Church might have to say about anything may be safely dismissed as a medieval irrelevance.

Paul Elie, however, plays this old game with remarkable ineptness. As Catholic historian Dr. James Hitchcock has pointed out, there has been such a proliferation of pastoral teachings by various Church bodies in recent times that the authentic, dogmatic *magisterium* of the Church is in danger of being choked off and overwhelmed. Such pastoral sources include Vatican II, which I, like many other Catholics, regard as an unfortunate event; the daily allocutions of the Pontificate; and the endless stream of left-wing sociobabble issuing from the lips of our own irrepressible U.S. Catholic Conference. These pastoral exhortations are not dogma. They do not come from the Chair of Peter, nor do they propose what is worthy of belief always and everywhere in matters of faith or morals. They are not in the same category as such teachings as the Divinity of Christ, the perpetual Virginity of Mary, the Real Presence, the existence of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory; or the teachings against contraception, abortion, divorce, and homosexuality.

DAVID R. WADE
Aurora, Illinois

The last words

To the editors:

Camille Paglia's reply to my criticism ("Wolf Pack," Correspondence, April 13) ranged widely but failed to address the questions I raised about her methods. In "Feminist Fatale" (March 16), I challenged her statement that "feminists want men and women to be the same." Her response—that she is in fact well acquainted with work on sexual difference such as Suzanne Gordon's and Carol Gilligan's—seems to compound the problem. Whatever Paglia thinks of their merits, the fact remains that most current feminist thinkers are elucidating differences between the sexes; if she is indeed aware of this, her mischaracterization is all the more disturbing.

There is more at stake here than academic quibbling. The premise Paglia attributes to feminists—that "men and women are the same"—would strike almost anyone as laughable, counterintuitive, and alienating. A movement promoting this claim would surely be wrongheaded. The author of such a sentence leads readers away from further inquiry into feminist debate, but without having earned through legitimate persuasion the right to do so.

Paglia castigates women's studies for ignoring a century's worth of work on sexuality, specifically that of Karen Horney and Melanie Klein. (Paglia seeks to dismiss my reference to Horney and Klein by suggesting that they belong to the '20s rather than "midcentury." While their influence certainly dates from the '20s, Horney's major books span the years 1937-50, and Klein's, 1932-61.) I did not have to move from my chair to find a wealth of citations of their work in standard feminist texts: Phyllis Chesler's *Women and Madness*, Gilbert and Gubar's *No Man's Land*, Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose's *Feminine Sexuality*, Nancy J. Chodorow's *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (twenty-three references), and Dorothy Dinnerstein's *The Mermaid and The Minotaur* (twenty-eight references).

Paglia's charge that "feminism is the establishment now" will come as a welcome surprise to the mere 5 percent of tenured faculty on prestigious campuses who are women—a percentage that is no higher than it was in the 1920s. As for her assertion that "there is no such backlash against feminism": I wish her joy in explaining that to women everywhere who are facing the likelihood of a Supreme Court ruling on *Roe* v. *Wade* this summer.

Finally, regarding Paglia's repetition of her claim that "feminism has slid into a censorious, Carry Nation repressiveness" and that "beautiful" and "sexy" feminists and feminisms ended with the early Germaine Greer: it just ain't so. There is, Paglia must know, a thriving feminist erotic culture that spans every political and sensual persuasion (including those who can't stand each other), and glamorous symbols of feminism range from Queen Latifah and Gloria Steinem to Faye Wattleton and Jodie Foster. Think of the new anthology *Erotica* introduced by Jeanette Winterson, of *On Our Backs* and Lily Pond's journal *Yellow Silk*, of Candida Royale's pornographic

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videos and Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party," *Thelma & Louise*, *Mississippi Masala*, and Sharon Olds's poetry. We've come a long way from *Fear of Flying*.

Even those often-demonized and too-seldom-read critics, Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, do not simplistically conclude that "all sex is rape." As radical philosophers, they ask us to question how pure the concept of "consent" can be in a world in which women lack basic legal, reproductive, and economic rights. This is precisely what radical philosophers of the civil rights movement do when they ask us to question how "equal" and "free" the concepts of equality and freedom can be in a society that is systematically racist. This critique does not mean that men and women cannot be sources of erotic joy to one another; Dworkin's last novel-memoir, *Mercy*, celebrates heterosexual eroticism as well as condemns sexual violence.

Regarding Brad Wilcox: Reagan and Bush can sleep easily now that Wilcox has helped us to understand that female sexual desire is the true cause of the decline of our inner cities. The 67 percent "illegitimacy" rate that he cites among urban girls is surely a consequence of too little feminist empowerment, not too much. Where he seems to offer these girls "Just Say No" pins, at a time when AIDS is the sixth-leading cause of death among teenagers, a feminist social policy would provide them with condoms and other contraceptives, sexual education, prenatal care—that is, with real protection.

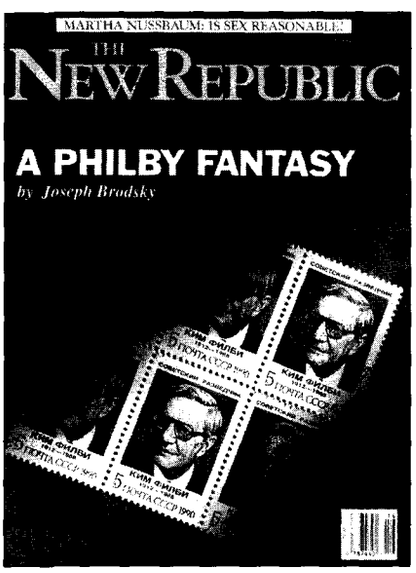
NAOMI WOLF
New York, New York

Camille Paglia replies:

In falsely claiming, in her meandering letter, that "most current feminist thinkers are elucidating differences between the sexes," Wolf fails to see that when such differences are posited by feminists, the female is systematically valorized over the male. Carol Gilligan and Suzanne Gordon, for example, present women as wonderfully ethical and nurturing, the noble humanitarian models for poor, flawed men and greedy, destructive patriarchal society. Second, Wolf appears to be completely in the dark about social constructionism, the ideology that has dominated academic discourse in the humanities more than fifteen years. Even the mawkish Hélène Cixous, with her misty visions of primal womanliness, doesn't know diddly squat about hormones or animal behavior.

As for Melanie Klein and Karen Horney, Wolf again displays her startling amateurishness as a researcher. It was not by books but by articles that Klein and Horney made their pioneering contributions in the 1920s. Wolf plainly has no knowledge of the massive archives of the international papers of psychoanalysis, all of which are available in the Yale library. This proves my point about the myopic provincialism of women's studies, which has substituted hen-coop gabble for slow, solid historical learning.

There is not enough space for me to give my judgment of the canonized feminist names Wolf recites like a litany: the coarse, vulgar Phyllis Chesler; the clumsy, unlearned Gilbert and Gubar; the mushy Dorothy Dinnerstein; the dilettantish fad-follower Jacqueline Rose; the intelligent but pedestrian Nancy Chodorow; the promising but Lacan-flawed and now recessive Juliet



Mitchell. In writing my academic exposé, "Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders" (*Arion*, Spring 1991), I spent six months reviewing literary theory and feminist criticism of the past twenty years. Wolf is dead wrong in her claim that women's studies admits the continuing importance and relevance of the founders of psychoanalysis, beginning with Freud.

Finally, Wolf's views on erotica are incoherent, beginning with her ignorance of the rabid feminist protests against the lesbian S&M magazine *On Our Backs*, which as of last year twelve feminist bookstores nationwide still refused to carry. Wolf seriously understates the totalitarian anti-sex position of MacKinnon and Dworkin. And Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party," with its heavy load of pious, didactic messages, was hardly intended as erotica, for heaven's sake. One could go on and on, but why bother? Wolf has prejudices, not information, and she wears them like a peacock hat.

Undeserving language

To the editors:

Alan Wolfe ("The New American Dilemma," April 13) is right that I object to the way we now use "moral language in discussing poverty"—and for two reasons. First, calling the poor undeserving may make moralizers feel good, but it does absolutely nothing to reduce poverty. Nor does it end such poverty-related problems as teenage motherhood, school failure, drug dealing, etc., which I am as much against as Wolfe.

Second, until moral language is administered equally and there are studies of the undeserving working, middle, and upper classes, moralizing about poverty is just one more of the cruel games that the better-off play with the poor.

HERBERT J. GANS
New York, New York

The writer is Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology at Columbia University.

Stop

To the editors:

In 1986 I was stopped for speeding on I-880 outside Oakland. Like Jonathan Bines ("Speed Camp," Washington Diarist, April 6), I attended traffic school to avoid a conviction. My clearest memory of the day was the amount of time spent discussing our feelings. How did driving make us feel? Some liked it. It made others angry. (I noted their license numbers in order to avoid them on the road.) The role-playing we did regarding feelings toward police during traffic stops (nervous, annoyed) was equally New Age.

I did learn how to minimize the chance of being stopped by the police: since red cars get stopped most often, don't drive one. No one had investigated the nature of the causality between red cars and police stops, however. I also learned that the state legislature authorized the highway patrol to conduct searches and seizures of questionable constitutionality when it bought the patrol combination flashlight-breathalyzers earlier that year.

A friend from Boston who took the class with me pointed out that this sort of thing could never succeed in the East, because people who drive on I-95 don't respond well to such behavior modification. Maybe that's why tests are necessary in Virginia, and only certificates of completion are in Palo Alto.

ANNE WOLFSON
Washington, D.C.

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FROM WASHINGTON

He'll do too

As a person and as a political phenomenon, H. Ross Perot is deplorable in many ways. Let us list some of them.

First, from a partisan perspective, it is hard to believe that his candidacy won't hurt Bill Clinton more than George Bush in the end. Clinton can only win by turning the election into a referendum on the incumbent, and Perot will be there to split the "no" vote.

Second, Perot's popularity illustrates either the decadence of the political system or the political immaturity of the electorate (take your pick). Whichever, it is pathetic that so many voters are so eager to reach outside the system for a name to vote for. Perot is the ultimate anti-politics candidate in a year when anti-politics is the most fatuous politics of all.

Then there is the related tiresome convention that anyone truly qualified to be president shouldn't want the job. Perot's "I'll run if you beg me" approach is working for him the way it never worked for Mario Cuomo because he is completely outside the political system. It's an update on the myth of Cincinnatus, the farmer who reluctantly lays down his plow to solve the mess in government, then returns to the private sector with the thanks of a grateful nation.

Perot's candidacy is also the latest expression of the 1980s myth of the businessman as popular hero and savior. Lee Iacocca and Peter Ueberroth enjoyed earlier fantasy flights on the notion that what this country needs is a good CEO.

Indeed, if the Perot phenomenon has any recognizable political flavor, it's fascism. He was a tough but loving paterfamilias in his company, and he'll do the same for his country. He will sweep aside the dithering politicians to carry out the true will of the people. He will make the trains run on time. What Alberto Fujimori is doing for Peru, Ross Perot will do for the United States. If he hears the call.

Perot's personality seems perfectly suited to this role. He has the successful businessman's nearly demented self-confidence—I can do brain surgery because I'm rich—and the short man's strutting egomania. He has the revealing habit of incessantly quoting himself. As I was saying just the other day, that is a sure sign of an ego out of control. And yet he believes deeply in his own humility—prides himself on it, in fact.

Especially for a non-politician, Perot is a brilliant sound-bite artist. He favors silver bullet solutions and strikes a "can-do" posture—as if running the country were a matter of boldness and organization, like rescuing hostages from Iran.

Finally, it is not a happy development that Perot is prepared to spend $100 million of his own money on his campaign. There are too many other people who wouldn't miss $100 million if it would get them on the cover of *Newsweek*. In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Thorstein Veblen movingly discussed the challenge to rich people of giving meaning to fortunes too large to be appreciated in normal material terms. But traditional solutions such as mansions, yachts, and race horses at least have the advantage of not perverting the democratic system. It's true that PAC money is also corrupting. But why must we choose one or the other?

All that said, though, I have a soft spot for Ross Perot. I've had it since I found myself trapped in a room where he was giving a speech on education reform in Texas. Perot headed a governor's commission on the subject. To my surprise, he delivered an eloquent plea for government spending and for redistribution on the basis of shared communal values. It wasn't fair, he said, and it wasn't good for Texas, that poor school districts had less money for education than rich ones. He made social spending sound like good business sense. He persuaded the state both to raise taxes and to shift expenditures from rich to poor. Quite a feat, in 1985.

Perot is accused of having no coherent set of political values, of choosing his issues on the cafeteria line. He himself brags predictably that he is more interested in practical solutions than in ideology. "I hate labels. I'm an independent." And so on. And yet Perot's cafe-

continued on page 49

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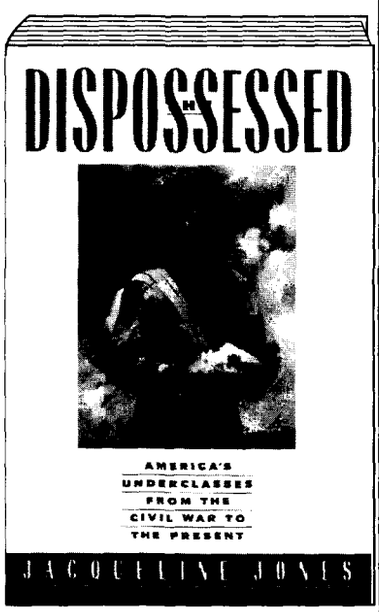

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAY 18, 1992

DUMP 'ROE'

The Rehnquist Court took up the Pennsylvania abortion case last week and is likely to gut *Roe* v. *Wade* by July. This is good news for the pro-choice movement and the Constitution. Ever since *Roe* was decided in 1973, the editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC have held that a woman's right to choose or reject an abortion should be protected. We have also believed that the right is nowhere to be found in the Constitution, and that the brazen judicial activism of *Roe* postponed a battle that should have been settled in Congress or the states. As the Democrats acknowledge—grudgingly—that they cannot put off the fight much longer, they find themselves in the unaccustomed position of having a chance to win it. But the squeamishness of the Court and the pro-choice leadership could create further delays.

Despite their swaggering rhetoric about "strict construction," the conservative justices seem afraid to admit that they are overturning *Roe*, even as they prepare to administer the coup de grace. In the 1989 *Webster* decision, a four-justice plurality demoted a woman's wish to have an abortion from a "fundamental right" to a "liberty interest," and agreed that restrictions on abortion should be upheld if they are "rationally related" to the state's interest in protecting fetuses throughout pregnancy. Justice Scalia properly taunted his colleagues for overturning *Roe* without having the courage to say so. (*Roe* said that restrictions on abortion have to pass a much more rigorous "strict scrutiny" test, and that a state's interest in protecting fetuses only becomes compelling in the third trimester.) It is hard to imagine that Justice Souter or Thomas won't provide a fifth vote for the "rational basis" test, which will mean that *Roe* is dead—even if the Court confuses matters by unexpectedly striking down part of the Pennsylvania law.

At oral argument last week, Justice Kennedy suggested disingenuously that abandoning *Roe*'s "strict scrutiny" test wouldn't be the same as overruling *Roe*. It would, and pro-choicers shouldn't be fooled. Justice O'Connor wants to prolong the agony by substituting an "undue burden" test. This arbitrary compromise—as activist as *Roe*—would be unfortunate since it would perpetuate the focus on the courts rather than Congress. We hope that the Reagan and Bush justices, who were appointed for the purpose, will be principled enough to overturn *Roe* openly and cleanly.

The pro-choice members of Congress, meanwhile, don't have to wait for the Court's decision obscuring the question this summer. They should pass the Freedom of Choice Act as soon as possible, and force the president's veto well before November. The act says simply that "a state may not restrict the right of a woman to choose to terminate a pregnancy (1) before fetal viability or (2) at any time, if such termination is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman." In a clean stroke, the act would supersede the state battles over abortion, and would protect abortion rights no less securely than *Roe* did. (The debate should clarify whether the statute is intended to go beyond *Roe*.) And if Congress fails to override the president's veto, pro-choicers can try to convert the presidential election into a national referendum on abortion.

As if to prove how fervently the Democrats want to lose in November, George Mitchell, the Senate majority leader, has taken the curious position that Congress may not have the constitutional authority to enact the Freedom of Choice Act. This shows how *Roe* v. *Wade* has conditioned the Democrats to avoid politics by cowering behind legalisms. And as a legal matter, Mitchell's concerns—which the administration has approvingly invoked—are absurdly conservative. Ever since the New Deal, the Supreme Court has said that Congress can regulate anything that has a trivial effect on interstate commerce—from backyard vegetable gardens to racial discrimination. Even Robert Bork concedes that it is "too late" for conservatives to roll back the expansive reading of the Commerce clause; and for the Rehnquist Court to invoke the clause to strike down the Freedom of Choice Act would be judicial activism far more dramatic than *Roe* v. *Wade*.

To ensure that the more mischievous justices will not be tempted, however, Congress could make specific findings that state restrictions on abortion affect interstate commerce: if abortion were banned in one state, women would travel to another. There is a second source of constitutional authority: the Fourteenth Amendment, which says that Congress can pass "appropriate legislation" guaranteeing the equal protection of the laws. Just to be sure, Congress could also make specific findings that abortion restrictions deny women equal protection. That should be enough to satisfy even Justice Scalia. •

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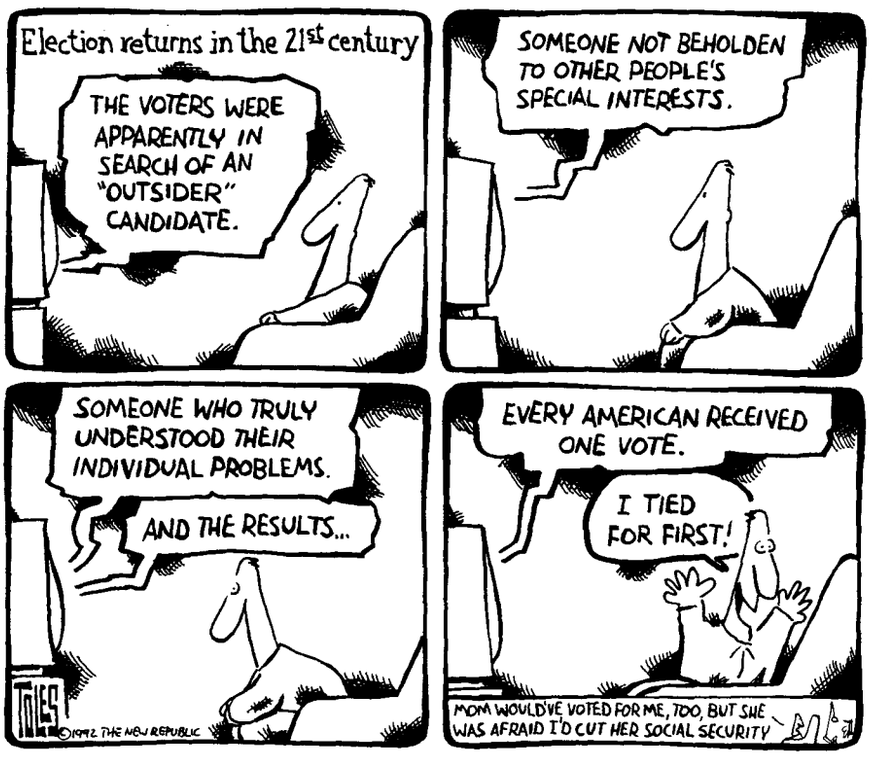
NOTEBOOK

BUSHISM OF THE WEEK: "We've set these six education goals to reach by the year 2000, and when today's third- and fourth-graders will be taking part in this event—this academic decathlon—by then—and you all know these goals—our kids are going to—one of them, the first one—our kids will be—start school ready to learn." —April 23, to the winners of the Academic Decathlon in a Rose Garden ceremony

SICK JOKE: This year's parody issue of the *Harvard Law Review* included a send-up of an article by Mary Joe Frug, a feminist legal scholar who was murdered in April 1991. Like most student parodies, this one was tasteless: it referred to Frug as "Rigor Mortis Professor of Law" and didn't get any funnier. Appearing on the anniversary of her death, it was worse than gross. Although its aim was clearly to ridicule radical legal scholarship, its tone was so ugly and its timing so insensitive that it ceded any right to be taken seriously. It should be protected as free speech, of course, and the p.c. police—including in this case the putative liberal Laurence Tribe—should not be allowed to punish the students responsible in any official manner. But it's a sad day on America's campuses when even those who are attacking the excesses of today's radical scholarship and defending free speech on campus should be associated with obscenity of this kind. They do their alleged cause no good at all.


Election returns in the 21st century
THE VOTERS WERE APPARENTLY IN SEARCH OF AN "OUTSIDER" CANDIDATE.
SOMEONE NOT BEHOLDEN TO OTHER PEOPLE'S SPECIAL INTERESTS.
SOMEONE WHO TRULY UNDERSTOOD THEIR INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS.
AND THE RESULTS...
EVERY AMERICAN RECEIVED ONE VOTE.
I TIED FOR FIRST!
MOM WOULD'VE VOTED FOR ME, TOO, BUT SHE WAS AFRAID I'D CUT HER SOCIAL SECURITY
TOLES
©1992 THE NEW REPUBLIC

ILL WIND: Paul Tsongas has never been reluctant to conflate his coping with chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant with political courage. Now we learn, in an extraordinary article in *The New York Times* by Lawrence K. Altman, that Tsongas has, at best, seriously misrepresented himself and his condition. He has not been cancer-free since 1986, as he previously asserted; nor did his doctors ever believe that he was thoroughly cured, as he repeatedly informed the public. Rather he suffered a recurrence in 1987, when he underwent radiation treatment for a cancerous lymph node. Despite his uncertain prognosis, he decided to run for president anyway. Tsongas says that he forgot about the relapse of an illness he was once told was terminal. This explanation is simply incredible. But it is not only Tsongas whose credibility is wanting. His doctors at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston (of which Mr. Tsongas is a trustee) also neglected to recall the recurrence of his cancer during lengthy press interviews. In addition, Dr. Tak Takvorian, described in the *Times* as "an ardent supporter of Mr. Tsongas's campaign," advised the candidate "not to provide the voluminous pages of his medical records to reporters, and those records were not released." What we have here is a first-class medical scandal. Only Tsongas's personal physicians were allowed by the authorities at Dana-Farber to discuss the case—and they did not tell the whole truth. The result of their restraint was that the candidate was permitted to mislead the public about his true fitness to hold the presidency.

STRAIGHT-SPEAKING: Two weeks ago we noted the silliness of *The Washington Times*'s scandal-mongering about Bill Clinton's brother, Roger, allegedly having sex in the governor's mansion in Arkansas. We casually noted: "Consensual sex, at last check, was still legal, even in Arkansas." We were, of course, wrong. If you're gay in Arkansas, consensual sex in private is punishable by up to one year in prison, a state of affairs that Governor Clinton has hardly been swift to rectify. It's also illegal in twenty-five states—and D.C. According to the FBI, 107,600 arrests were made for sodomy nationwide in 1990, arrests that the Supreme Court regards as perfectly constitutional. We're not suggesting, of course, that Roger Clinton was engaging in gay sex (although we're sure *The Washington Times* is checking on that one); we're merely reminded that for a minority of Americans, the right to sexual relations at all is still against the law. And that many of us easily forget it.

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AFGHONE: Administration officials no longer speaks of the Soviet people. (But then, there's no longer a Soviet Union.) They've just stopped talking about the Yugoslav people. "Iraqi people" and "Syrian people," however, still come trippingly off their tongues. Right now, they're obsessed with another oxymoron: the Afghan nation. Unfortunately, the "Afghan people" doesn't exist, and never has. The U.N. envoy to the chaos there has implored the various peoples of Afghanistan to "be Afghans first," which is like telling them not to be themselves. They are Pathans first, Hazaras and Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkmens, the primordial loyalties to which they were born. For better or worse—and we think, in the long run, for better—the dispersal or at least the modification of the borders of the multiethnic states of West Asia and the Middle East is inevitable. Otherwise their fate is endless civil war, punctuated by seasons of cruel rule by minority or, at least, plurality regimes, motivated by the "dominate or die" imperative. The old maps will have to be redrawn. By now we should know they were little more than artifice, the last trick of the imperials against the natives.

ROMANIAMANIA: Glad though we are to see TNR having an impact overseas, the Romanian response to a translation of Norman Manea's article on Mircea Eliade ("Happy Guilt," TNR, August 5, 1991) in the weekly *22* has been disturbing. In a country where the pre-Communist fascist experience remains taboo, the article provoked hysteria. *Romania Mare*, a weekly edited by a former Ceausescuite, stigmatized Manea and Dan Pavel, the deputy editor of *22*, as enemies of the national culture. The series of articles cited Manea's text as part of a Jewish conspiracy to destroy Romanian values. *Romania Mare* claims "foreigners" should not impose preferences on "true" Romanians who have the right to worship national "heroes" from pro-Nazi Marshal Antonescu to Ceausescu. This fits into a larger, depressing pattern. The front page of the weekly *Baricada* displays Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the captain of the Iron Guard, Europe's third-largest fascist movement in the 1930s, while the weekly *Europa* serializes the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Simultaneously, the "Movement for Romania" created by Marian Munteanu, a student leader in the 1990 Bucharest demonstrations, professes democratic beliefs while defining democracy in ethnic and religious terms. In Romania communism and fascism are still on intimate terms, and genuine decommunization remains unthinkable without an exorcism of the authoritarian rightist past.

GRANTED: *The New York Times* science section reports on a team of social psychologists who have determined that the "cool pose" adopted by some urban blacks represents "a bit of posturing that insulates them from an otherwise overwhelming social reality." This astonishing conclusion is the result of six years' study. Another breakthrough recently reported in the *Science Times* involves a University of Kansas researcher who has developed a method of testing people for "hope," concluding that "the loss of hope is . . . a stronger sign that a person may commit suicide than other factors." Our favorite: "Happy or Sad, a Mood Can Prove Contagious." ("The more emotionally expressive people are, the more apt they are to transmit their moods to someone they talk with, said Dr. John Cacciopo . . .") Soon to come, another study: confronted with the bleeding obvious, newspaper readers exercise a peculiar propensity to turn the page.

YOU DON'T SAY:

FIGHTING IMPERILS
EFFORTS TO HALT
WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA

—*The New York Times*, April 11
(thanks to Mark Nadel, New York, New York)

OUT ON LOAN: It's legitimate to argue that U.S. foreign aid should be conditional on American foreign policy requirements. It is inconsistent, however, to insist that housing loan guarantees to Israel should depend on a settlement freeze in the West Bank while no conditions are applied to recipients of similar benefits anywhere else in the world. There are no strings attached to the $18 billion in loan guarantees the United States extends annually to such countries as Pakistan, El Salvador, Indonesia, South Korea, and China, all nations with significant human rights problems. China is the beneficiary of $425 million in outstanding loans and grants. President Bush has made sure that these funds are not linked to Chinese political repression or the occupation of Tibet. And since 1987 Arab governments have received more than $12 billion in guarantees, according to a study by the Center for Foreign Policy Options. Iraq was the beneficiary of $3.4 billion worth of such assurances; the White House pushed for additional amounts as late as mid-1990. Saddam, who creates refugees, never had to face the scrutiny Shamir does in resettling them. Israel stands alone in one other respect as well. Unlike Iraq, China, and other beneficiaries of U.S. largess, it has never missed a payment.

EARLY EXIT: In his review of *After the Fall: The Failure of Communism and the Future of Socialism* ("The Poverty of Theory," TNR, March 30), Alan Ryan said that E.P. Thompson stayed in the British Communist Party after the suppression of the Hungarian insurrection of 1956. He wishes to correct his error. In fact, Thompson had been highly critical of the Party before 1956 and was one of those who left after Hungary. •

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WHITE HOUSE WATCH

PRO, ER, PRO-LIFE

By Fred Barnes

The hardest thing to find in the upper reaches of the Bush re-election campaign is someone who agrees with President Bush's opposition to abortion. I've searched and found only one pro-lifer, issues director Jim Cicconi. Torie Clarke, the campaign spokeswoman, won't say if she agrees with Bush. Nor will political director Mary Matalin. Campaign chairman Robert Mosbacher, campaign manager Robert Teeter, and Republican national chairman Rich Bond are all pro-choice. Who's left? Jim Pinkerton, the idea man of the re-election drive. When he spoke at Harvard University on April 21 he was peppered with questions about abortion. How could he reconcile what he called "the principle of choice" in schools with Bush's anti-choice stand on abortion? "Education is education," Pinkerton said. "Abortion is abortion. They're different things."

You can bet the honchos of the Bush campaign aren't pressuring the president to broadcast his anti-abortion credentials for all to hear. They not only disagree with him, they think his position is a loser politically, except with pro-lifers. So the strategy is to "narrowcast"—a White House aide's word—the issue for the anti-abortion crowd. Pro-lifers, particularly evangelical Christians, are an important bloc in the Republican presidential coalition. They can't be ignored. Many are Reagan Democrats, the swing voters Bill Clinton and the Democratic establishment are desperately courting. The Bush scheme is to broach the abortion issue with pro-lifers, but with no one else. Bush has gotten pretty good at this.

On April 21, for example, he dropped by the Roosevelt Room to spend a half-hour privately with fifteen evangelical leaders invited by Leigh Ann Metzger, the White House liaison to religious groups. (Jerry Falwell, the evangelical closest to Bush, was invited, but his plane was grounded by bad weather.) Bush didn't wait to be asked about abortion. "Listen," he said, "I'm committed to this. I've been with you on this issue." He didn't have to spell out his position. They know it: he's for overturning *Roe* v. *Wade* and is opposed to abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or saving the life of the mother. He didn't get a single question on abortion. The evangelicals were more worried that he might be soft on gay rights. Perish the thought, Bush said.

Bush speeches are models of narrowcasting. Bush, says an aide, is comfortable raising the subject of abortion at "only the forums where he's sure it'll be well received." To religious broadcasters on January 27, he talked up religious values. "The first value is not simply American but universal," he said. "I refer to the sanctity of life. I will stand on the side of choosing life." To the National Association of Evangelicals on March 3, he said, "Let me be clear: I support the right to life." He also denounced the Freedom of Choice Act, which would legislatively create a right to abortion nationwide. "It would impose on all fifty states an unprecedented regime of abortion on demand going well beyond even *Roe* v. *Wade*," Bush said. "... This is not right. And it will not become law as long as I am president of the United States of America."

The worry now at the Bush campaign is not that pro-lifers will bolt. Bush's unflinching position prompted the National Right to Life Committee to endorse his re-election on March 2, ignoring another pro-life Republican, Patrick Buchanan. Instead Bushies fret that the abortion issue will become too big. If the Supreme Court, as expected, upholds Pennsylvania's restrictions on abortion, that's bound to make the issue more salient. And the fight over the abortion plank at the Republican national convention will get all the more attention. "You hope this issue is not a driving issue," says a senior campaign official. "Most people are on the other side of the fence. Most people are pro-choice."

Bushies believe they'll be able to contain pro-choice forces at the convention. The tentative plan is to retain the abortion language from the 1988 platform. It advocates a constitutional amendment banning abortion in all instances. "The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed," it says. The Bush forces are willing to add language, however, defining the Republican Party as having no litmus test on this or other issues. It takes 20 percent of the GOP platform committee to send a pro-choice minority report to the convention and six state delegations to get a floor debate. To block this, Bushies will appeal to loyalty. "The party has to stand together and stand with the president, putting aside personal opinions," a campaign official says. Even pro-choice Governor Pete Wilson of California has told Bush aides he'll go along and bring the state's delegation with him.

Narrowcasting isn't backed by everyone in the Bush camp. Pro-lifers at the White House, notably Vice President Quayle and his influential aide Bill Kristol, believe abortion will be a major issue in the campaign, no matter what Bushies do to douse it. The ruling on Pennsylvania's restrictions on abortion ensures this. So Bush should be prepared to join the fight and at least defend limits on abortions. Quayle has already jumped in. "I look at the Pennsylvania statute," he told *USA Today* on April 21, "and I think their governor and state legislature are probably more in tune with the American people than the media and some of

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our critics think." He said the statute is reasonable. "Look at what it is: twenty-four-hour waiting period, parental consent for someone under 18, informing a spouse when an abortion is to occur. Is that unreasonable? Is that out of the mainstream? I don't think so."

"You don't win this fight by timidity or by saying nothing," says Kristol. "Quayle is articulating a pro-life position that's principled in seeking to do away with abortion, except in very rare circumstances, but moderate in recognizing the limits on what can be done in most states now. Voters want restrictions on abortion on demand. That's a point we need to make. [Pro-choice forces] are the ones with the extreme position. They defend the status quo of 1.5 million abortions a year. If we can frame the debate that way, we'll win easily." To pursue this, Quayle has agreed to address the National Right to Life's convention in June. He summoned Catholic intellectuals Michael Novak and George Wiegel in late April to advise him on packaging a case against abortion that is, as Kristol puts it, "intelligent and attractive to the middle ground of Americans who fall between the two camps."

Though he doesn't emphasize it, Quayle hasn't forgotten the ultimate pro-life aim of making abortion illegal. This goal may have slipped Bush's mind altogether. The phrase "ban abortion" never crosses his lips. Even in his remarks (by phone) to an anti-abortion rally on January 22, Bush didn't refer to this goal. Maybe he'll get to it later, but not before November 3. •

THE SHRUB FILE

CHERRY BLOOMERS

By Douglas G. McGrath

Tuesday, April 7, 1992

All the evening newscasts tonight led again with stories of how adrift the administration is. So a meeting on aid to the Soviets was canceled and the campaign team met. The Shrub said, "There's a lot of clamor out there that nothing seems to be bubbling around over here in the White House up here. Gotta *resist it.* I am one who lives in the White House. I know how much bubbling around goes on. There's an adequacy of bubbling around for the Bush taste." Mr. Skinner said the president shouldn't worry; no one was suggesting that he actually *do* anything, just *appear* to be doing something. "OK!" the Shrub responded, cheering up. "Anyone up for a game of night soccer?"

Wednesday, April 8

The Shrub was out of personal quarters at 5 a.m. He was in a T-shirt that said, "China Is For Lovers" and a pair of Pee Wee Herman briefs. "Time to see the cherry bloomers!" he said. Agent Banks and I couldn't believe it. It was pitch black. He went back in to dress and get Mrs. Shrub.

The walk along the Tidal Basin was not very satisfactory. Visibility was zero. Total darkness, except when the photographers took pictures and then the flashes made us blind for thirty seconds. A cameraman for NBC walked straight out of the park and into traffic. Mrs. Shrub took a Beef Jerky out of her purse. A photographer from *Vanity Fair* tried to take her picture but he walked into a tree.

The Shrub pointed to the White House. "My boy is in the window. Well, *behind* it, really—George Jr.—in a bed. In a hay-hitting mode now, but waited to see how his team did before the aforementioned hay was hit." No one could see what he was pointing at. "There," he said, gesturing people forward until several people fell in the Basin. "OK!" he said. "Super walk. Back to the big house!" Two agents were lost on this trip. This has got me thinking about the turnover of agents under the Shrub. More than thirteen men have developed heart or respiratory impediments trying to keep up with him; several men have had knee work; one guy thinks he has the bends. Agent Donjon was so exhausted after the Shrub's last vacation that he resigned and became a terrorist in Syria.

Last week the Shrub threw out the first ball of the baseball season and hit Agent Diggins in the head. Diggins has been in and out of consciousness ever since, only saying over and over, "No, Mrs. Bush. If the president *said* he was at the office working late, then I'm sure he was." The Shrub went to the hospital to bring Agent Diggins the baseball, which he had autographed for him. "Not overburdened in the brain department," he said, patting Diggins a little on the head, "but loyal as a lapdog."

Monday, April 13

A black day for Secret Service agents who are proud of their badges. Former President Rah-Rah was in Las Vegas, accepting an award. At the end of his speech were stage directions that read, "This is the end of the speech, there is no more, sit down now." But apparently his secretary forgot to mark them as directions, so he read them out loud, turned the page over and started the speech again.

Lady McRah-Rah was backstage with the agents. She had been sitting quietly, flipping a razor up and down on her tongue. On the third time through the speech, she realized what was happening. "Oh, my God," she said. "He's on a loop!" She said that someone had to do something. A man closest to the stage, his back to her, said, "I'll go."

As soon as he stepped into the light, Lady McRah-Rah flinched. "Oh, dear," she said. "He's got a *beard!* Looks like one of those dreadful men Patti always . . . " But then the man picked up the glass eagle that was Rah-Rah's gift and smashed it. Rah-Rah grabbed his notes in a panic and said, "Are you the next act?" The man then

continued on page 14

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Our safety engineers work with the most advanced technology available to reduce the chance of serious injury in the event of an accident.

"Occupant Kinematics" is one of the fancy terms they use. It's the study of motion during a collision. Using kinematics, restraint systems are analyzed before testing for maximum safety by a computerized three-dimensional model.

We also have a special safety feature for some very special passengers. The world's first built-in child-restraint seat, available on Caravan and Voyager. Our competition doesn't have anything like it.

Nobody likes to think about trouble on the road. But if it happens, you'll be glad our engineers spend every day thinking about it.

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When you build minivans, you make safety one of your top priorities. We do, because a lot of families are depending on us.

Over the years, Chrysler has added safety feature after safety feature to its minivans. We've met every government safety standard on time or ahead of time, and set new standards of our own. And we'll continue to do so.

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This September we'll start building a limited number of electric Dodge Caravans and Plymouth Voyagers. Like our present minivans, they'll hold seven people and plenty of cargo. They'll be front-wheel drive, with electric-powered steering and brakes, and optional electric-powered air-conditioning. The range is 120 miles on the highway, 90 in city stop-and-go driving. Then you simply recharge the battery.

In the automotive business you lead, follow, or get out of the way. Our aim is to lead by building our minivans better, building them safer, building them cleaner. So we can reach the only goal that really matters: a satisfied customer.

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started speaking about nuclear testing. By that time, agents had grabbed Rah-Rah and were pulling him back stage. As they did, he said, "If you don't like my speech, all right, I'll stop, but I was president of this country for eight terms. I think I deserve *some* respect!" Backstage, he looked very sad at Lady McRah-Rah, and said, "Mommy, that man broke my bird!"

The shocking thing is how this happened. When I came on duty tonight, the Shrub was in the Situation Room. He was watching a video of the event and *laughing!* "Look at him clutch those notes, Duker! Life support system or what?" He was laughing so hard he had lifted his feet off the ground and was kicking them back and forth in the air. Then he said, "Hand me the Don Ameche." He called the CIA.

"Bobby? GB, here. Just watching the news out of Vegas and I wanted to tell you—presidential compliment coming!—what a super job you did. The bearded guy was great! Maybe we can shave him and use him against Clinton? Obviously I can't contact him, but let him know how happy I am, would you? Put in some extra pork rinds in his paycheck!"

I know the Shrub has been mad at Rah-Rah ever since Rah-Rah said that the Shrub didn't stand for anything, but to do this! *To an old man!*

These Yale guys are mean. They don't call it Skull and Bones for nothing.

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH is a playwright and screenwriter.

THE PRESS

JUST CHECKING

By Jay Mathews

The New York Times has beaten me to several stories and so, I admit, I love to see them screw up. A recent twenty-nine-paragraph, front-page correction was a case in point. A National Academy of Sciences panel had not, as the *Times* had originally reported, called for a moratorium on DNA fingerprinting. It would be childish of me to wallow in such a perverse pleasure any more than I already have if there were not a lesson for both readers and reporters, made no less relevant by the *Times*'s swift and professional confession of error.

How many times have you seen something written about yourself, or a subject you knew well, and winced at some small flaw? We journalists know we rarely get it exactly right. We run corrections, but anyone who has worked as a reporter or editor knows how narrowly the correctable mistake is defined and how many errors never get corrected. The real problem is not so much mega-booboos like the *Times* story, which tend to get noticed and fixed, but the innumerable little errors. Spreading from newspaper to television to magazine and back again, they are magnified by repetition into bigger ones, and nibble away at press credibility. The Chinese government has shamelessly exploited an initial false report, still believed in the West, that students were massacred in Tiananmen Square (as opposed to other parts of the city) to discredit coverage of the crackdown. Many people still think that Eugene McCarthy won the most votes in the 1968 New Hampshire primary and that even slight exposure to asbestos will kill you.

As far back as anyone I know can remember, it has been a firm if unwritten rule of newspaper work that no source sees a story before it is published. That would be tantamount, the rule said, to giving the source permission to write the story, or at least to make great mischief if the story offended in some way. I can't remember how I learned this ancient prohibition. By the time I reached *The Washington Post* twenty years ago, I knew it was the worst kind of deviant behavior, akin to wearing a Nixon-Agnew button to work. Seven years ago I began to break that rule. Since then I have encountered a few others doing the same. I wish there were more.

I've always been somewhat prissy about what I write. As a young reporter I would run my stories through my head before I went to sleep, wondering if I had gotten a nuance right, explained a development clearly. I double-checked facts, but occasionally an error would wiggle through my safety net. There didn't seem to be anything more I could do about it until the day I decided to risk a violation of the taboo. I did it to protect an old friend. He'd helped me arrange interviews at an Indian tribal office in Montana where he was both a tribal member and a staff economist. It was a very political story, and an error, I thought, could do him harm. I swore him to secrecy and read him the story. He caught one minor mistake, a misstatement of the amount paid for a local dam. I made the correction, sent in the story, and then thought about it. He had not asked me to change my view of what happened. No quotes were altered. I slept well that night. I decided to try it again.

Dr. Leonard Bailey corrected my description of one of the arteries he had fixed to a baboon's heart implanted in a sick human infant. A Pasadena police lieutenant told me I had misidentified the helicopter used in the city's little war against medfly spraying. Each time I would warn that I was checking only for factual accuracy, not approval. If they told me something was wrong, I would double-check before I made the change.

The reactions surprised me. Prickly publicists who usually complained about failure to use their bosses' middle initials began to offer bits of information critical of their employers. Scientists who had snorted at the thought of getting anything right in a newspaper began calling with story ideas. People being skewered cursed the tormentors I was quoting but never demanded a retraction.

None of the bogeymen materialized. No one complained to my editors about the slant of a story. No one

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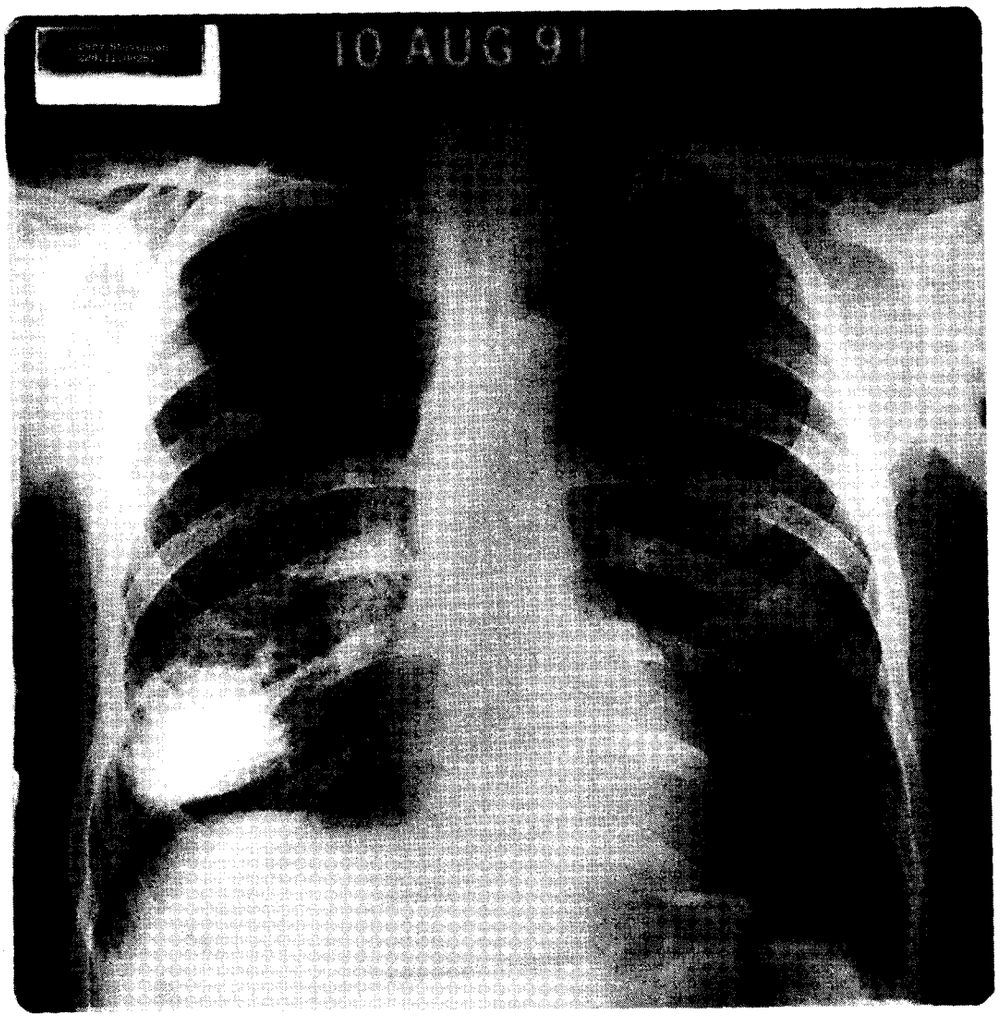

Because he works for a small company, the prognosis isn't good for his fellow workers either.

A serious illness in a small company can be tragic for other employees as well. When renewing its health insurance plan the company may be charged excessively high premiums and be forced to drop the plan.

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To find out more, write: New Approaches to Health Care, The Prudential, 751 Broad Street, 16th Fl., Newark, N.J. 07102-3777.

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tried to persuade my sources to deny unfavorable quotes. People occasionally tried to change their own quotes but would back off when I explained that was not possible. No one attempted to blow my few exclusives, though I was careful to save my reading of such stories for the very last moment.

I have encountered only one instance of misbehavior by someone who got an early look. A California politician's chief aide was so pleased that *The Washington Post* had presented his boss in a favorable light that he leaked this fact to several Los Angeles television stations before the story was published. I scooped myself by a few hours, but no permanent harm was done.

In 1985 I wrote an article in the *Washington Journalism Review* defending my working habits, mostly as an act of self-protection. I wanted my editors to know what I was doing and at the same time get their blessing into print. The reaction to my confession from this limited audience was mixed, to say the least. An editor of the *San Jose Mercury News* posted it on his bulletin board with an approving note. A journalism professor wrote to say if I couldn't stand the heat, I should try another occupation. One of my favorite *Washington Post* editors, the late Howard Simons, told me I was committing a heresy. A few other reporters, I learned, were doing the same, with the tacit approval of their editors. I eventually concluded that the taboo was just one more hoary anachronism, the product of old fears and unexamined assumptions.

I do not think newspapers should require reporters to show stories to sources. That would risk lawsuits on those few occasions when it is not possible to reach a source. What I suggest instead are a few limited, casual experiments, and I know a good place to start. There is one kind of news story—the obituary—where errors can cause real emotional pain. The only time most people ever have direct contact with a journalist is when they are interviewed for an obituary on their father or mother in the local paper. A mistake, even a small one, feels like someone scratched the coffin with a rusty nail.

Why shouldn't editors encourage obit writers to show such stories to relatives before publication? No one is going to leak the story to the competition. No one is going to try to take political advantage. Time is rarely an issue. It would be the simplest thing to fax a draft to a son or daughter to check for factual errors. If that worked, who knows what might happen next?

As reporters we are accustomed to exposing automakers who slap together cars and depend on recalls to make everything right. We have excoriated prosecutors who locked up innocents and then, discovering their error, set them free with a bare apology. Many of my colleagues think that front-page corrections are preferable to leaping into the unknown, but I don't. It's time we applied the principles of openness and accuracy we monitor in others to the practices we engage in ourselves.

JAY MATHEWS, a former *Washington Post* bureau chief in Beijing and Los Angeles, reports for *Newsweek* in New York.

CHICAGO POSTCARD

TUNNEL VISION

By David Jackson

Struck by a series of natural and unnatural disasters, Chicago has begun to feel like a biblical city—or at least like the set of a Cecil B. deMille movie. A few winters ago Lake Michigan rose three feet, and waves battered apartment buildings from the North Shore to the South Side. Then summer blackouts plunged vast stretches of the West Side into darkness and fear. In January a natural gas pipeline surged unexpectedly, causing ten North Side bungalows to burst into flames one by one, leaving four people dead. Then came the flood.

During the early morning hours of April 13, an ancient freight tunnel that runs under the Chicago River suddenly ruptured, spewing 250 million gallons of fetid green water though the subterranean labyrinth of utility tunnels that snakes beneath the Loop, the city's central business district.

Silt surged up through the basement drainpipes of Marshall Field's department store, claiming the spring inventory. Water muscled its way into the lower levels of City Hall like a newly elected alderman, and sat there mulishly. By 10 a.m. rank smells were reported in the city's toniest office buildings. Phone lines went dead. Loop workers began to crowd onto homebound trains—some not to return for a week—anxiously trading news reports and rumors. Could the tunnel be repaired? Would holes burst all over? Was the entire Loop about to topple? As business owners locked their doors, a drizzle that would last all week began to slick the massive stone buildings of the deserted Loop.

Repeatedly touring the damaged tunnel site, Mayor Richard M. Daley seemed to grow smaller by the day. Haggard and gray, he peered gloomily into the excavated street at the black, swirling pit. The son of America's most legendary big-city boss—a mayor credited with building the city that now seems to be collapsing piece by piece—young Daley has found himself in a perilous position: having to concede that the rupture that caused the flood was abetted by his own bumbling and penny-pinching bureaucrats.

It will be years before the economic impact of the disaster can be measured, but Chicagoans expect it to cost billions of dollars. Week-long shutdowns, clean-up, and inventory loss could cost private businesses $1 billion, according to the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. Three-quarters of the next estimated billion—the price of plugging the tunnel and shoring up the city's infras-

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tructure—will be borne by the federal government in disaster relief funds, but the other 25 percent is the subject of a bitter fight between Daley and Illinois Governor Jim Edgar. When Edgar offered $3 million in relief funds, Daley aides said they were "insulted"; Edgar's people called Daley a complainer. And worst of all could be the as yet immeasurable cost to the city to fight or settle the class action lawsuits brought by insurance companies and property owners.

Also thrown into doubt by the flood are the futures of several of Chicago's architectural landmarks. Turn-of-the-century office buildings sit on foundations less than twenty feet deep, and those could be weakened by the soaking and the sudden, enormous pressure changes. Among the treasures at risk: Burnham and Root's Monadnock building (1891), at sixteen stories the tallest structure ever erected at that time with its walls entirely supported by its masonry; William LeBaron Jenny's imperious Manhattan (1890), the first high-rise supported purely by a metal skeletal frame; and the Rookery (1888), the vaulting interior lobby of which was refurbished in brass and marble by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1905 and lavishly restored last year.

Even without the flood, Chicago faced the fate of all aging American cities. Half of the city's schools were built before World War II, half of its homes before the Great Depression. Its massive elevated train line dates from the beginning of the century. And as their budgets tightened, local politicians scrimped on the part of the city voters cannot see: the underground infrastructure, including the forty-seven-mile-long, 80-year-old network of underground tunnels. Once used to shuttle coal between office buildings, the cement-lined tunnels are now laced with fiber optics cords, telephone lines, and the cables that carry electricity to about a third of the Loop's buildings.

But the challenge of rebuilding the brick-and-mortar underground has been slowed by the daunting task of reforming Chicago's patronage-bloated city work force. As a chronology of the events that led to the disaster revealed, at every step where they could have saved the day, city workers were loafing, dallying, or goofing off. The saga goes back to last spring, when a maritime construction company was awarded a $335,000 city contract to pound clusters of fifty-foot-long wooden pilings into the river bottom around an old drawbridge. The clusters act as buffers, protecting the bridge from passing barge traffic. By all indications, a completely routine job. But with clearance from a city project manager (who had no idea the tunnel lay perilously close below), the construction company hammered the clusters a few feet away from the spot originally specified in the contract—and directly over the tunnel, thus causing the initial fissure. The city engineer in charge of monitoring the job never made a final inspection of the site because he couldn't find a parking spot near the bridge. When an inspector eventually discovered the damage five months later, he took dramatic photos of the cracked tunnel wall, exposed pilings, and leaking river silt, but didn't pick up his film for a week. It took another week and half a dozen meetings before someone decided to write a memo recommending that the tunnel breach be repaired. Then city officials balked at paying the repair costs—$50,000 more than the $10,000 originally estimated—and instead scheduled another round of meetings.... And the wall came tumbling down.

The leak was finally plugged six days later by a massive assault of municipal resources. During the first twenty-four hours, city workers poured 250 cubic yards of quick-setting concrete into the swirling water, followed by 1,500 tons of sand, and broken pavement chunks. A barge of mattresses, donated by a hospital, was docked nearby in the river.

The spectacular feat of coordinating the repairs was matched only by the Daley administration's effort to control media coverage of it. Mayoral aides clamped down on access to records and prohibited all but the most orchestrated interviews with city employees. At one point Daley got so frazzled by reporters' demands for information that he lashed out: "Sometimes you wish people were injured or killed," he snarled. "That makes your business much happier."

But finally, the mayor forced the resignations of three bureaucrats, suspended three others, and is seeking the dismissal of two more. It is still far from clear whether the officials Daley fired were the ones most responsible, or fall guys for wider ineptitude. "The people of Chicago have experienced an understandable loss of confidence in their government, and that's something we can't fix with cement trucks, or with federal disaster funds, or with all the experts in the world," Daley said.

But when he was asked if every city contract might not show the same accretion of small, slothful missteps as the botched piling and tunnel repair jobs if subjected to the same scrutiny, Daley could only shake his head.

"We hope not," he said. "We hope not."

DAVID JACKSON is a reporter for *The Chicago Tribune.*

How to feel for the homeless.

INSTANT EMPATHY

By Daniel Radosh

In September Craig Hanson, now a senior at Georgetown University, will attend Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar. And just last March he was living on the streets, sleeping in cardboard boxes, begging for spare change. He wasn't exactly homeless, mind you, just trying it for a day.

It's the latest trend in social activism: instant empathy.

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Across the country programs are springing up that offer privileged but concerned citizens the opportunity to play homeless for a short spell. They return to their lives with a heightened awareness and a deepened commitment. That's the idea, anyway.

Hanson was a participant in Urban Plunge, a program orchestrated for the National Coalition for the Homeless by Washington field coordinator Michael Stoops. Stoops (yes, this is his real name) estimates he has helped put nearly 1,000 people on the streets since the early 1980s. The idea is simple: take a small group of people—usually college students—give them some old clothes, a bedroll, and a quarter a day, and set them loose for twenty-four or forty-eight hours. Stoops, who has himself voluntarily spent five months on the streets, explains that plungers "do everything that the homeless do.... They roam the streets, they go to soup kitchens, they beg for money, they dumpster-dive, they look for work, they attempt to use rest rooms in fancy restaurants." Occasionally Urban Plunge asks real homeless people to act as "tour guides."

Plungers resist any suggestions that this is merely old-fashioned slumming. "We're not just spreading coffee grounds on our face and dressing down," says Sean Madison, a University of Illinois senior who has plunged in both D.C. and Atlanta. But they are shaky when pressed on this point. "The point is not for them to get a firsthand account of what it's like to be homeless," says Stoops, "but to get a sense of how homeless people are treated like dirt in this country." So how does it feel to be treated like dirt? Describing his experience, Hanson uses variations of the word "fascinating" seven times in ten minutes.

Dawn Jones is a sophomore at the University of Texas who organized her own version of the Plunge on her Austin campus. Without the guidance of professionals like Stoops or homeless tour guides, Jones and six other students had an experience that was slightly less intense. The group arranged in advance to spend one night at a Salvation Army shelter ("The food was just horrible. I mean, it was like this watery—ugh"). Nevertheless, Jones feels that she learned something about "what it [is] like to be completely subject to the environment."

"At some points," says Jones, "we were just sitting around. We just had this aimlessness. Like, 'I don't know, I guess we're just gonna hang out here'—which is a problem homeless people face." Of course, it's also a problem college students face. Still, students who "do" homelessness are convinced that they are learning from the experience. Madison swears he learned about issues of race, gender, and sexuality. "In those forty-eight hours that you're on the streets, you're going to see things and you're going to experience things that you can never experience from the place of privilege. It's really that shedding of the privilege that all of us have.... The color of my skin is a privilege, my genitalia is a privilege, but when you get out on the streets there tends to be a levelizer.... You see how racism really works through the homelessness issue, how gender and sexism works its way through. And you see a lot of heterosexism and homophobia working its way through." Hanson discovered, "They all want to talk about the Redskins." Hanson was also fascinated by what he called the "networking system": "Homeless people know exactly where the vans are going to be and what time the food is distributed. They *know* all this stuff."

Can it be done in less than a day? Sure. At American University a class called "Poverty and Culture" offers begging as a possible project. This year the one student who chose to spend an hour-and-a-half approaching strangers at Dupont Circle said she ended up feeling "very close" to the real homeless people there. She gave one of them the $10 she made.

But do you even have to beg? Can't you just sleep outside or something? That was the idea behind the University of Hartford's "couch-a-thon," a fund-raiser for AmeriCares organized by brothers of the Theta Chi fraternity who wanted to "do something positive." For forty-eight hours students who had collected pledges crowded onto couches on the campus green. They shivered in the snow, huddled under blankets, and watched television. One of the organizers, Jeff Krietman, says: "If they have to do it 365 days a year, I don't know how they do it. I had problems just doing it for forty-eight hours." Krietman nervously admits that a decision was made not to invite homeless people to the event: "I did not want anything happening that could possibly have bad effects for the project and the participants."

Absolutely. Just because we're aiming for empathy doesn't mean we shouldn't do our best to minimize bad effects. "A museum is a safe environment. People will go to a museum who will not go to a soup kitchen." So says Chris Hardman, who created Etiquette of the Undercaste, a "social simulation" designed to provide a "firsthand" experience of poverty through a combination of art and theater. Opened in San Francisco in 1988, Etiquette is a traveling exhibit that most recently spent two months at the Smithsonian Institution's Experimental Gallery. Visitors enter a mazelike construction one at a time by lying on a morgue slab, "dying," and being reborn into the lowest class of society. A Walkman plays sound bites of street talk ("I'm hungry for drugs, my friend," "The streets is nasty") while the participant wanders through abstract mock-ups of an alleyway, a jail cell, a park bench, etc. Hardman calls it "an un-funhouse."

After the half-hour experience, visitors are invited to comment on whether their attitudes toward the homeless were affected. Typical comments: "Yes. Feel more empathy," "A real eye-opener," "It makes me want to change the world."

Despite its suspect status as a true simulation of homelessness, Etiquette is at least a serious attempt to convey certain facets of street life; it's not a game by any means. For that you'd have to turn to the Dallas Salvation Army's Homeless Experience and Resource Training Simulation. HEARTS is a homeless version of How To Host A Murder. Players are given a character profile ("Mike is a Viet-

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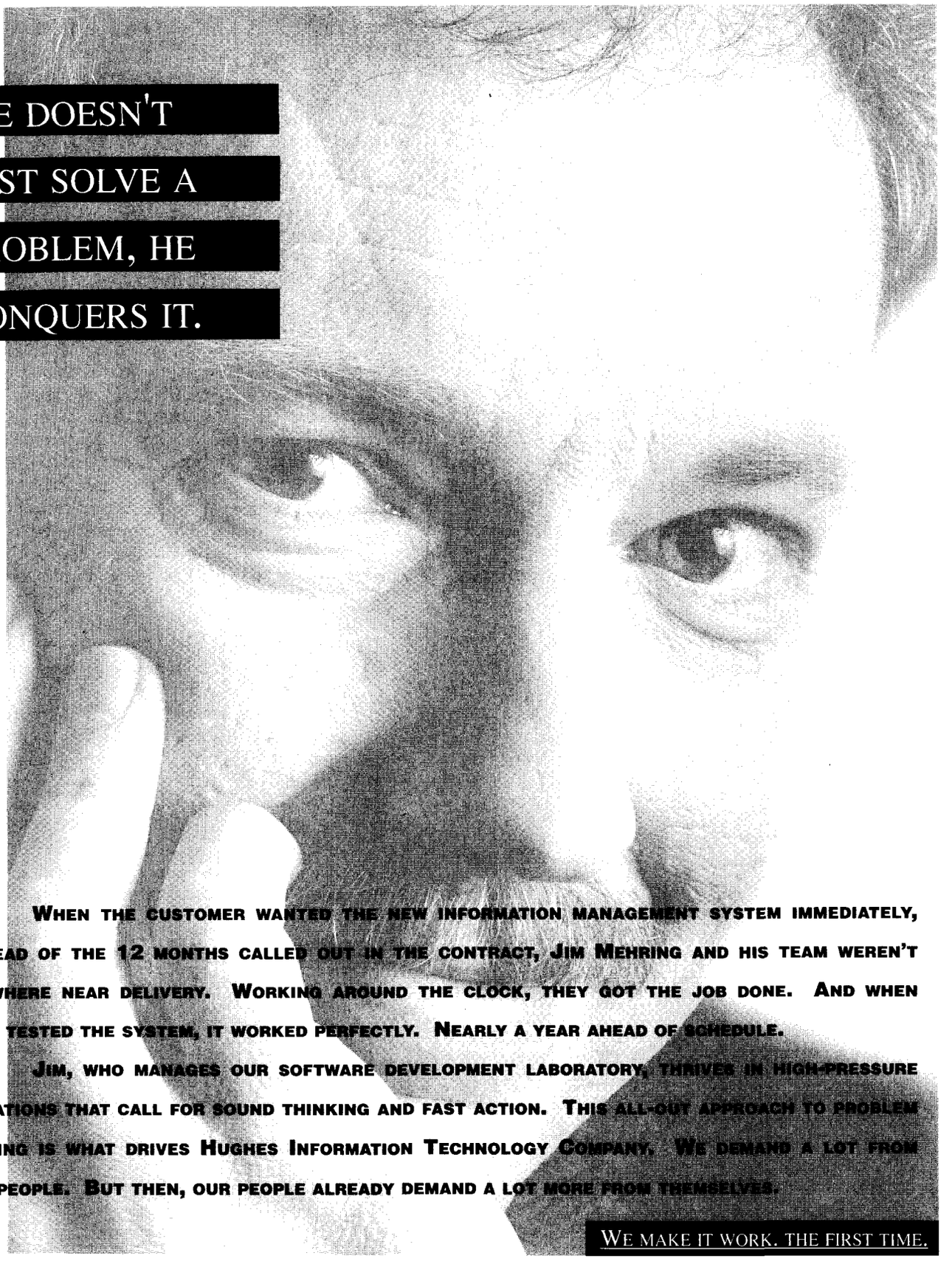

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nam vet.... He has drug and alcohol problems") and a piece of actual homeless-person clothing (taken from the Army's store of donations and generally worn tied around the neck) and set about scampering between tables designated as various social agencies in an effort to receive necessary assistance. According to the do-it-yourself manual, "The simulation was designed ... to help [participants] experience and learn to better understand the feelings, frustrations, and daily lives of the homeless (and near homeless) population."

Tables are staffed by actual employees of agencies such as the Housing Authority and Social Security. Elizabeth Woods, public relations director of the Dallas Salvation Army, says, "We've even built in the walking element the homeless person has as much as possible; they have to take a lap around the perimeter between each agency visit." Players are stopped randomly and given fate cards ("Good news! You found shoes in a garbage can"). "We try to build a little fun into it," says Woods, "although it is a serious experience. You would be amazed.... People come out of there weeping."

DANIEL RADOSH is an editorial assistant at *SPY* magazine .

De-Stasifying East Germany.

THE TRIAL

By Niall Ferguson

BERLIN

It is Kafka's revenge on Berlin—as if the dying author planted its seed there seventy years ago. Today, no less than when it was the nerve center of the German Democratic Republic, the Central Archive of the Ministry for State Security (MFS) in Berlin-Lichtenberg inspires the same dread as Kafka's Castle. Its innumerable files, containing around a billion pages and stretching along 202 kilometers of shelves, wield the power of *Metamorphosis*.

In October 1990, almost a year after the Berlin Wall had come down and the Social Democratic Party had been reborn in East Germany, its chairman, Manfred Böhme, was metamorphosed into IM (Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter) Maximilian—one of the MFS's thousands of "unofficial collaborators." In common parlance, he'd been a "Stasi" spy. Soon after, it was the turn of Wolfgang Schnur, the leader of "Democratic Awakening," another of the new parties founded in the heady days of the Revolution, and Martin Kirchner, general secretary of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's protégés, the East German Christian Democrats. His code name had been "Franke." The democratically elected minister-president of Thuringia, Josef Duchac, was next, followed by Gregor Gysi, the supposedly snow-white leader of the renamed Communist Party (code name "Notar"), and even Lothar de Maizière—elevated by Kohl to the position of CDU deputy chairman (code name "Czerni").

Currently the minister-president of Brandenburg, Manfred Stolpe, is under suspicion, a man whose prerevolutionary reputation as president of the Lutheran Church Council appeared without blemish. Stolpe has now admitted to having had at least 1,000 secret meetings with the Stasi in which he appears to have given details not only of internal Church affairs, but also of meetings with West German politicians including Helmut Schmidt, who was then chancellor. If, as seems likely, he was "IM Sekretär," his will be the next resignation.

The malaise is not confined to politics. Controversy continues over the postrevolutionary rector of the Humboldt University in Berlin, the theologian Heinrich Fink—allegedly "IM Heiner." The poet Alexander "Sasha" Anderson, once a respected figure on the Prenzlauer Berg dissident "scene," has been exposed variously as "Peters," "David Menzer," and "Fritz Müller"—a Stasi informer for fourteen years. Another supposed dissident, Knud Wollenberger, stands revealed as "IM Donald." For ten years he provided the Stasi with detailed reports on the activities of the pacifist Vera Wollenberger, his wife.

Nobody knows how many others there were: 300,000 at least. They were the eyes and ears of a secret police system whose paranoid appetite for information grew steadily, and whose punctilious attention to the petty details of hounding and harassing all those identified as "enemy-negative forces" beggars belief. It took the folk singer Wolf Biermann four days to get through the 40,000 pages of his Stasi files—the work of around seventy individuals who spied on him before and after his expulsion from the GDR in 1976. They bugged his house and telephone. They sabotaged his car. They recruited friends as "unofficial collaborators." They tried to lure his wife into an affair with a Stasi agent.

For Biermann, as well as other leading dissidents who were the Stasi's principal victims, anger at the treachery of trusted friends is mixed with disbelief at the meticulous malice of their masters. This was indeed "the banality of evil as farce"—the solemn statements of intent to orchestrate at opposition meetings "offensive argumentation by politically highly educated forces, able to demonstrate credibly and intelligibly the falsehood of the counterarguments"; the directive to an agent "to develop an authentic love relationship [*echte Liebesbeziehung*]" with his wife (an ironic premonition of the plaintive words of the Stasi chief Erich Mielke, confronted by the revolutionary crowds of 1989: "But I love you all," surely the true last words of Big Brother's "real existing socialism").

Yet it was no farce for the dissidents who languished in squalid prison cells, or the priest Heinz Eggert, mistreated in mental asylums—or any of the 112,000 people convicted of "endangering public security by anti-social conduct," opposition to state measures, or attempted

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flight to the West. It is for them, far more than for himself, that Biermann demands justice.

The problem is that justice is more easily demanded than achieved under the extraordinary circumstances of reunified Germany. The Rostock churchman Joachim Gauck, who was put in charge of the Stasi archive last year, is being asked not only to clean up the mess, but to identify those responsible for it. Quite apart from the sheer volume of material and the limited resources at his disposal, Gauck confronts legal problems of enormous complexity. East German officials and academics are losing their jobs on the basis of Gauck's assessments of their conduct under the old regime. Yet some legal authorities question the validity of this process—indeed, question the legitimacy of using the Stasi files as evidence in any judicial way. Many of those whose offenses cry out for prosecution are protected by the difficulty of applying West German law to offenses committed in the German Democratic Republic during its existence. Given the fact that East German law placed virtually no limits on the conduct of the security services, bizarre expedients are proving necessary. Mielke is currently standing trial for murders committed in 1931, when he was a young Communist activist. The trial has already run into problems because of claims by his lawyers that the 84-year-old Mielke is unfit to appear in court. If he escapes, while the former border guards responsible for shootings at the Wall go to prison, the inevitable conclusion will be that it is the small fry rather than the sharks who are to be punished. People have not forgotten that only a few years ago Erich Honecker was given the red carpet treatment in Bonn.

The biggest problem confronting those who want to make the Stasi answer for its actions, however, is historical rather than legal. We have been here before in Germany: in 1945, when the victorious Allies set about the task of distinguishing committed Nazis from mere fellow travelers. Quite apart from the ten top Nazis hanged at Nuremberg, there were around 175,000 arrests after the war; but only in the Soviet zone (where there were around 500 executions) was there a significant purge of society. In the West, "de-Nazification" began with the printing of 13 million questionnaires and ended with the de facto amnesty of Adenauer's "131 Law." The exigencies of the cold war were used to justify the rehabilitation of many who had played leading roles in the Third Reich. Although there have been subsequent efforts to reopen around 20,000 cases, East Germans have not forgotten the "Persil certificates" of the 1950s; and it is not just those with something to hide who ask whether the "Wessis" have any moral right to preside over "de-Stasification."

Of course, the analogy with Nazi Germany is overplayed. The East German dissident Jürgen Fuchs has spoken of "Auschwitz in the soul"; but there was no Holocaust within Honecker. Nazi Germany was an unstable and revolutionary regime whose megalomaniac leader was bent on war; Honecker's was a petty and stagnating Soviet satellite. Hitler dealt death to millions. Up until 1968 a mere 194 people were executed in the GDR; 200 were shot trying to cross the Wall in the years after 1961. More people have been killed as a result of road accidents since reunification.

The real analogy is with something older and more durable: the faceless officials and cynical snoopers of late Habsburg Austria or czarist Russia. The GDR was not Hitler's Germany (or, for that matter, Stalin's Russia), but something closer to the neo-absolutist states of Central and Eastern Europe that developed in the wake of the revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848. Metternich—"You see in me the Chief Minister of Police in Europe"—was Mielke in silk stockings, his network of agents assiduously opening the mail of each and every suspected liberal from the Danube to Dieppe. This was not a terroristic regime, but a timorous one; its methods were pedantic—and, of course, ultimately ineffective, recalling Conrad as much as Kafka.

The connection from Haldin (in *Under Western Eyes*) to Wolf Biermann may seem farfetched, but the link is there. After all, the last great farce of this kind came to a head in prerevolutionary Russia, where secret police so successfully penetrated the Bolshevik Party that there were two police agents on the editorial board of *Pravda* and one on the Central Committee. It is one of the finer ironies of Central European history that these neo-absolutist arts were ultimately perfected by the heirs of the Bolshevik revolution in East Berlin.

NIALL FERGUSON is a fellow of Peterhouse Cambridge.

The Sandinistas face real life.

CLING-ONS

By Arturo Cruz Jr. and Consuelo Cruz Sequeira

In 1990, a few days before national elections were to be held in Nicaragua, Comandante Jaime Wheelock of the Sandinistas' ruling FSLN visited Comandante Fidel Castro in Havana. "Tell me, Wheelock," Fidel demanded, "are you prepared for defeat?"

"Why do you say such things, Comandante?" Wheelock responded.

"Because the people often err," Fidel explained.

Not the people of Nicaragua, Wheelock assured him. Only recently the FSLN's candidate, Daniel Ortega, had mounted a stallion like a caudillo from the distant past and rode to the plaza, where he was acclaimed by a patriotic multitude.

Wheelock returned to Nicaragua and was shocked to discover that Fidel was right. After their electoral

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defeat, Wheelock said to his allies: "The old man warned us."

What the old man didn't say was that political defeat would be only the first blow. Suddenly party leaders realized that to preserve their status as members of a dignified middle class, they had to confront the horrors of quotidian life. They had to produce cash for the servant's morning trip to the market. Be punctual in the payment of the utilities and the children's Catholic school. Relinquish the state subsidies that had made their bourgeois comforts possible. Face up to the fact that they were no longer energetic young men and women. And forget the emotional support they once received from the socialist camp and the stirring International.

Of course, all was not lost. The FSLN retained control of the army, the police, its newspapers, radio and TV stations, its labor syndicates, and two major universities. For the Sandinista leaders, the challenge was to ensure themselves and other party members of a livelihood. But there was little time. In two months Violeta Chamorro, the president-elect, would be inaugurated. What to do? Aware of the power of language, the leaders immediately set about renaming institutions. To begin with, the FSLN created a myriad of "private foundations," which immediately became the domains of the former minister of foreign relations, the former first lady, the former minister of the economy, the former president, former official translators, and former press secretaries. The party also created "institutes" for anyone who had been someone. The Department of Political Education, which on the day prior to the election was still combating social-democratic ideas, was renamed "The Institute for the Development of Democracy."

But such foundations and institutes would not satisfy the enormous officialdom of the FSLN. Hence the notion of the "Sandinista entrepreneur," which, though inventive, harked back to a colonial tradition of private gain through the public works of church and state. The paradigm for the Sandinista entrepreneur was the former minister of tourism, who was renowned for the hyperinflated costs of his beachfront projects. "Sandinista enterprises" were formed quickly, so that massive transfers of state properties to the party could be completed with maximum expedience. In the tropical version of Eastern European nomenklatura or "spontaneous" privatization, the revolutionary state began to "sell" its inventories to the new Sandinista enterprises.

The state also gave Sandinista leaders its best haciendas—extensive properties endowed with first-rate livestock, new fences, tractors, crop-dusting planes, and landing strips. Not that everyone was appeased. Four army majors who were given coffee farms in exchange for their demobilization bitterly criticized the former Ministry of Agrarian Reform, which had assured them that the farms in question produced more than 300,000 pounds of coffee beans per season. But that figure, as the incensed officers would learn, was from the Somoza days; postrevolutionary production was barely a third of that.

The biggest problem facing the Sandinista leadership, however, was the party's disgruntled membership. For years the rank and file of the FSLN—known as the militant base—had bowed to their leaders. Their rallying cry had been: "National Directorate, Command Us!" And initially the great majority of FSLN members had favored the massive transfer of state properties to the party, on the assumption that, enriched and viable, the party would then employ its rank and file in the private realm. Instead, state properties went to individual potentates. The rank and file managed to secure little or nothing—typically a dilapidated car, or a plot of land, or perhaps one of the shabby houses constructed after the 1972 Managua earthquake. Now, feeling defrauded by their leaders and unable to secure jobs through the party, the militants insisted on drawing a distinction between the properties of the powerful comandantes as individuals and the patrimony of the Sandinista party. From among their own followers, the comandantes began to hear a kind of incantation: "We did not make the Revolution to leave the government as thieves."

The militants placed their hopes for vindication on the Party Congress that was scheduled to take place the summer after the April 1990 election. At that session, they planned to agitate for a full investigation into party finances. And in direct elections by secret ballot, they were determined to alter once and for all the membership of the National Directorate. But the Congress was postponed twice, until July 1991. It lasted three days, at the end of which party finances remained inscrutable. No direct elections were held, and the militants were forced to re-elect the Directorate in its entirety instead of voting for or against individual members. They did select two new members, however. One replaced Carlos Nuñez, who had just died of cancer in Havana. The other replaced General Humberto Ortega, who resigned from the FSLN's National Directorate in order to avoid the appearance of partisanship and to keep his four stars as chief of the "national" army. The Congress, for its part, gave the militants a small measure of satisfaction by expelling the wives of Daniel Ortega and Wheelock from the Sandinista Assembly.

But indirect revenge wasn't enough. An outspoken militant drafted a document in which he declared that the two classes within the FSLN were alienated by "abysmal and insuperable distances." Circulated among Sandinista households, the document also criticized "the majority of the leadership," whose "inexplicable weaknesses" made them "succumb to the temptations of the easy life, without apparent regard for the popular welfare."

The fragmentation of the FSLN, however, was actually more complex than a split between rich and poor. The old categories of "radicals" and "moderates," for example, became obsolete. As membership fell (to 15 percent of its original total in Managua), the National Directorate became embroiled in a vulgar power struggle. Its members fought to expand their economic fiefdoms and

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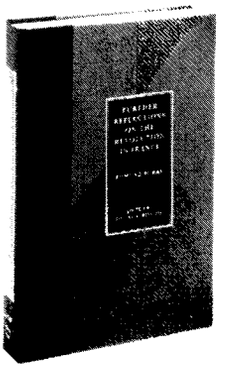

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fought over their share of public prominence. Daniel Ortega, the secretary general, was incessantly criticized by his comrades, who argued that he was addicted to the delirium of renown. Daniel frequently traveled abroad. He descended upon Felipe Gonzales of Spain, visited Saddam Hussein in Iraq yet again, and volunteered to mediate between the government of Peru and the Shining Path. He also announced his presidential candidacy for 1996. The announcement—premature and unilateral—caused deep resentment among his fellows in the National Directorate.

And then there was Humberto Ortega, who thanks to his resignation from the FSLN became a more powerful army chief than ever before. After his brother was voted out, and as the contra demobilization began, Humberto laid off 9,000 officers. Some were colonels, but the majority were lieutenants of various ranks. They too became disgruntled and openly spoke of the "bourgeois chiefs"—powerful officers with illustrious names, who were not likely to be dismissed by Humberto from their posts. Humberto then gained control of the state intelligence apparatus, which used to belong to his old adversary, Comandante Tomás Borge. And he carefully distanced himself from the FSLN, to the point that everyone learned his most telling preference, which was to be called "General Ortega"—as in "General Somoza." More important, Ortega forged an alliance with Antonio Lacayo, the son-in-law of President Violeta Chamorro and de facto prime minister. This alliance gave Humberto 17 percent of the national budget for his army, as well as a conglomerate of state businesses.

Now Humberto has begun to seek an understanding with the United States. Not too long ago he awarded the prestigious "Camilo Ortega" gold medal to the military attaché at the American Embassy. Struck in memory of the youngest and bravest of the Ortegas, the medal is reserved for warriors who perform heroic deeds in active combat. That Humberto should decorate a representative of the Pentagon with his dead brother's glory was interpreted by the leading comandantes of the FSLN as additional evidence of the general's "caudillismo" at a delicate juncture.

Traditionally, Nicaragua's incessant fragmentation has "required" the iron hand of a military man to impose order. In the public realm the dictator decides, at times capriciously, who is someone to be reckoned with and who is a nobody. And if he is efficient, like the Somozas, he strives to make his client network reach low and wide—in Humberto's case, far beyond the army. He never forgets that a stable bond between patron and client can engender a sense of mutual obligation and perhaps loyalty. If fragmentation continues unabated in Nicaragua, contending factions may increasingly turn to Humberto for arbitration. And Humberto, whose every move seems to anticipate this scenario, could rule Nicaragua for decades, first through surrogates, then openly. But even if he is successful, his ultimate failure is foreordained. The humble, like the mighty, feel the need to be someone; and in the end, a true someone will invariably exercise his independence.

ARTURO CRUZ JR., a visiting fellow at the Hudson Institute, and CONSUELO CRUZ SEQUEIRA write frequently on Latin American policies.

The David Baltimore case—and its lessons.

THE SCIENCE MOB

By Philip J. Hilts

NEOPTOLEMUS: You're capable, Odysseus, and resourceful. But you have no values.
ODYSSEUS: And where's the value in your carrying-on?
NEOPTOLEMUS: Candor before canniness. In doing the right thing and not just saying it.
—Seamus Heaney's translation of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*

In the years before World War II, science was a small, charmed profession. In 1940 there were about 200,000 scientists and $70 million in federal money. Scientists were a contemplative order, and their exposure to the world was limited. When an occasional question of sloppiness or misconduct arose, it was quietly resolved within the confines of the profession. But now, as the number of scientists reaches 1 million and their share of the nation's federal budget reaches $25 billion, the demands for greater accountability and openness are understandably more insistent. Though scientists would like to remain aloof, a brotherhood whose standards and integrity remain above public reproach, that era is over.

Stories about scientific misconduct are no longer an aberration. Indeed, in recent years the most notorious

PHILIP J. HILTS is a Washington correspondent for *The New York Times.*

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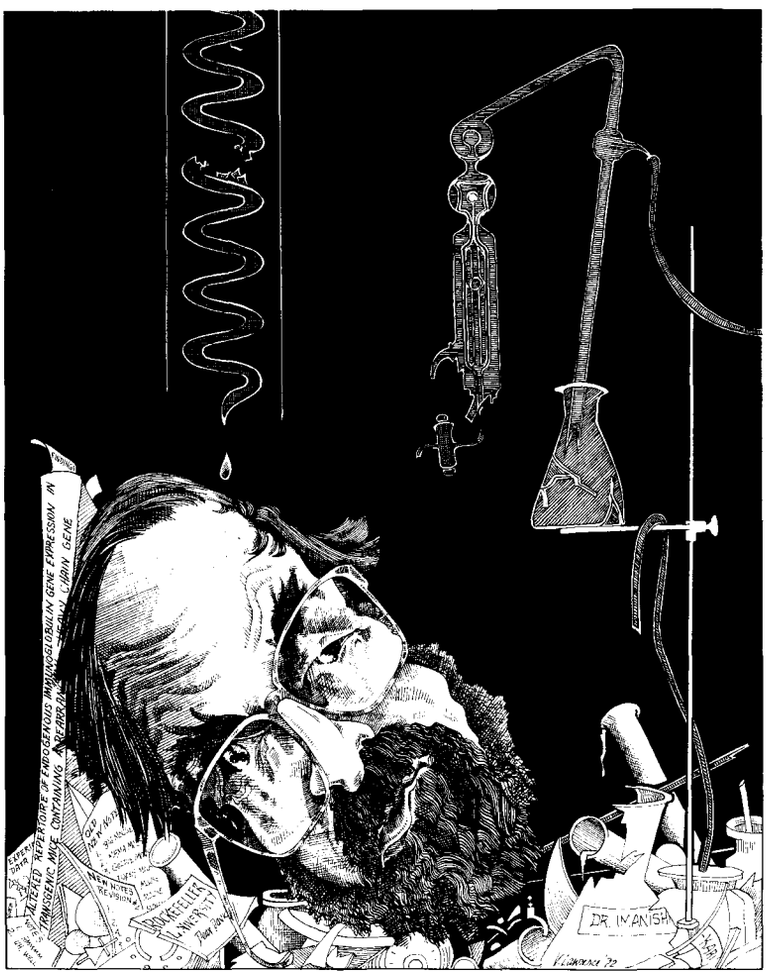
cases have involved some of this country's most reputable scientists and universities. In 1983 John Darsee, a researcher at Harvard Medical School, was found by the National Institutes of Health to have faked some data in his studies on heart disease. In 1984 the National Institute of Mental Health concluded that Stephen Breuning, a researcher at the University of Pittsburgh, had fabricated data in a paper about drug therapy for hyperactive children. In both cases earlier internal university investigations had cleared the scientists of blame. Robert Gallo, the chief of the Laboratory of Tumor Cell Biology at the NIH and the co-discoverer of the cause of AIDS, is under investigation by several federal agencies for not giving sufficient credit in 1984 for work performed by French scientists. A recent NIH report found him not guilty of misconduct but detailed several instances of irresponsible behavior.

The NIH, which is charged with investigating allegations of misconduct in federally funded research at universities, examines a few dozen such cases each year. It is impossible to say how many others remain under wraps at the universities. The reluctance of administrators to root out cases of misconduct by faculty is hardly surprising: when one comes to the attention of federal investigators, and the perpetrator is found guilty, his federal research funds are withdrawn. More important in a system in which reputation is paramount, a charge of misbehavior represents a permanent disgrace—a lingering impediment to future federal and private funding.

Perhaps the most remarkable case of misconduct in the annals of American science is the one known as "the Baltimore case." The most protracted scandal of the last several years, it stands as the exemplar of what's wrong with the defensive and self-regulating structure of the American scientific establishment. It's named after the scientist who refused to investigate allegations of faked notebooks, Dr. David Baltimore, rather than after Dr. Thereza Imanishi-Kari, the scientist charged with the fraud. And it's famous less because of the nature of the fraud than because Baltimore himself determined to make it famous. Like a Greek tragedy, it turns on a character flaw in the protagonist, unseen by himself but excruciatingly obvious to the audience, that allows him to commit a sequence of improbably foolish acts. Each leads to the final—maddeningly avoidable—fall.

The case is quite simple in many respects, and it could have been quickly resolved at the start. Instead it has dragged on for the past six years, involving dozens of eminent scientists who rallied behind Baltimore, and provoking two university inquiries, two formal investigations by the NIH, and three congressional hearings by the oversight committee responsible for looking into government fraud. And still it is not over. The NIH has not yet finished its investigation, and a grand jury in Baltimore is considering indictments against Imanishi-Kari.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DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

What we now have, though, is a thorough draft report by the Office of Scientific Integrity at the NIH that provides a factual guide to the impenetrable. From this and the testimony of each side since the draft was leaked to the press last spring, we know at least the sequence of events that led to the public humiliation of Baltimore, a Nobel Prize winner and former head of the Whitehead Institute and president of Rockefeller University. (Baltimore was finally pressured to resign from Rockefeller last fall by senior faculty who felt the ongoing scandal was an embarrassment to the university.) We cannot say why Baltimore did what he did. I have asked him repeatedly, and he is unable to say why.

The case began with a research paper, published in the journal *Cell* on April 25, 1986, titled, "Altered Repertoire of Endogenous Immunoglobulin Gene Expression in Transgenic Mice Containing a Rearranged Mu Heavy Chain Gene." The paper, written by

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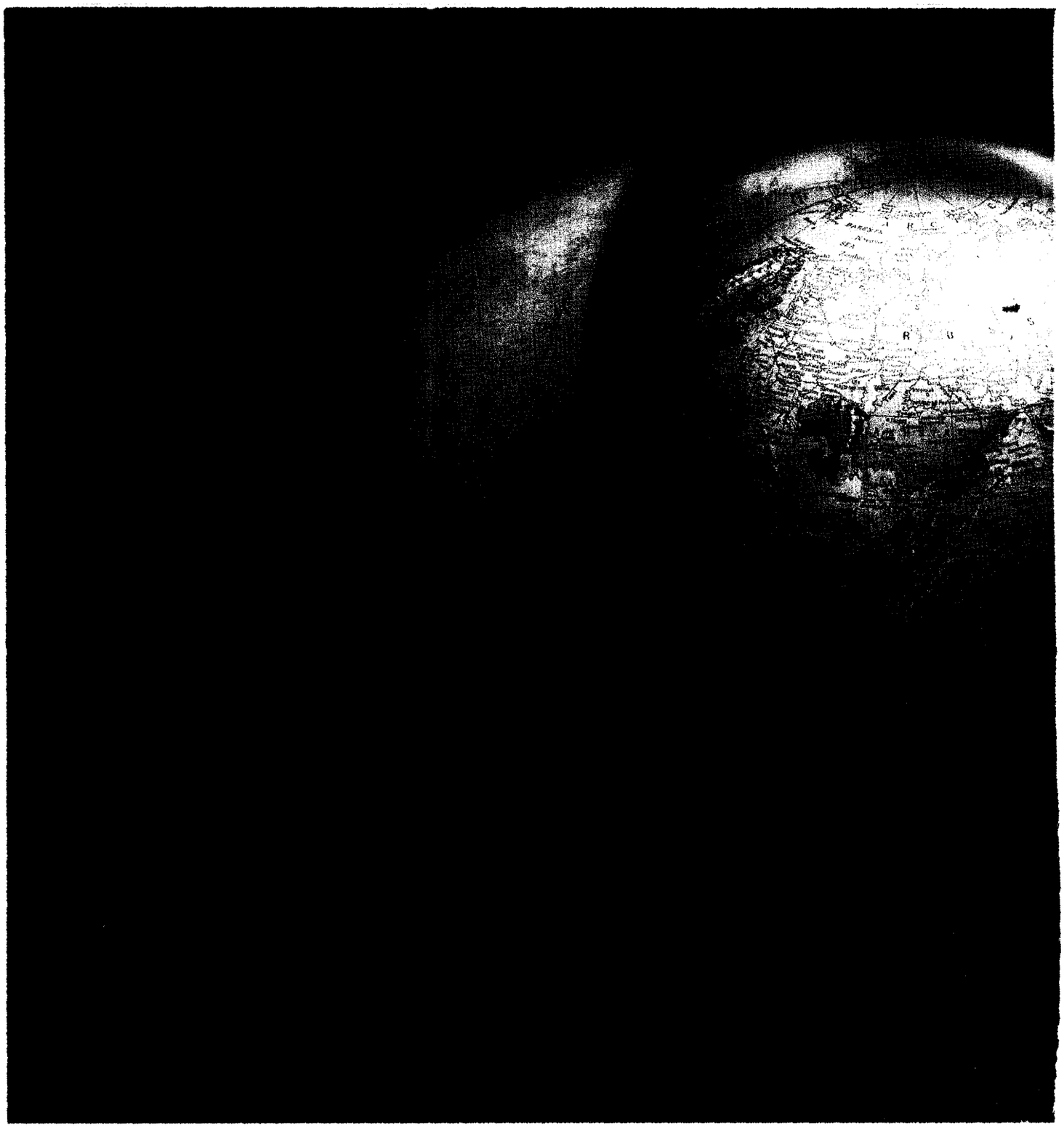

Never in the experience of most Americans alive today have the prospects for a better world seemed brighter.

Change over the last 18 months has altered relationships among nations and swept aside political alignments that have characterized most of the 20th century.

But there are old lessons worth heeding in this new world.

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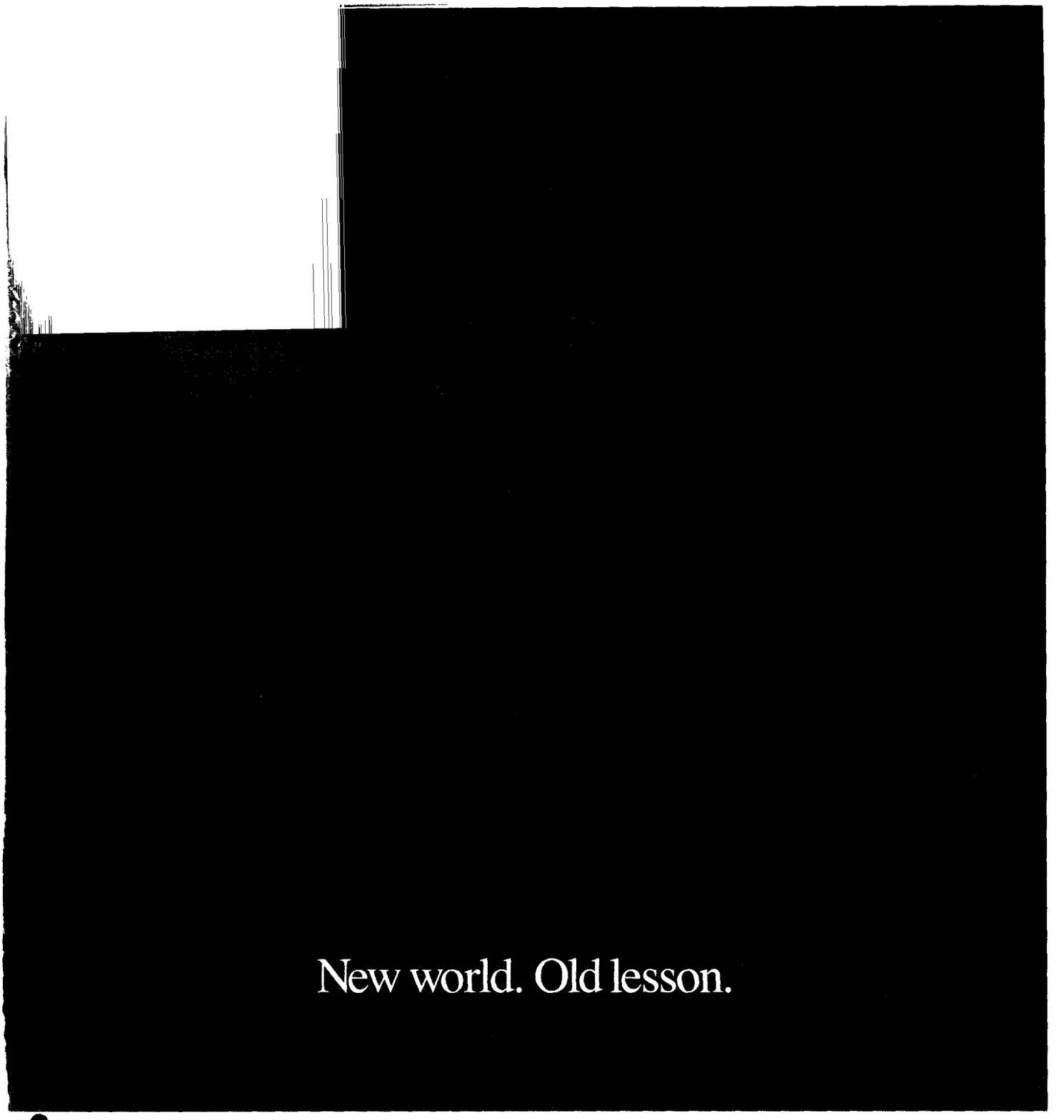

New world. Old lesson.

enterprise have prevailed after the long years of the cold war. And good reason, also, to remain strong in the future.

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Imanishi-Kari and co-authored by Baltimore (then her colleague at MIT) and three other scientists, described experiments that purported to show that when scientists inserted a foreign gene into mice, it did not, as expected, just make foreign antibodies. Rather, it had some unknown effect on the mouse's own genes, altering them to include antibodies that mimicked the foreign antibody. The paper implies that it might sometime be possible to gain command of the body's defenses by introducing foreign genes that would recruit the natural ones to attack a selected target.

The paper began to unravel almost immediately, even before publication. The warning signs came from the MIT postdoctoral student, Dr. Margot O'Toole, assigned by Imanishi-Kari to extend the work to the next step. She could not duplicate the work and wasted almost a year demonstrating that important experiments in the paper were wrong. It is always dangerous for postdoctoral students to challenge their superiors, upon whom they rely for every detail of their professional life, including money, lab space, and the opportunity to publish. This particular challenge would require either an extensive correction or a withdrawal of the paper, an unusual procedure that would embarrass all of the authors.

In May 1986 O'Toole first took the uncomfortable facts to her thesis adviser and two other scientists at Tufts University, which was about to hire Imanishi-Kari. They were concerned enough to call in Imanishi-Kari for proof of the work she'd done, but after a quick perusal of several pages of her notes on the experiment, they decided that whatever problems existed need not be disclosed. (Forensic experts at the Secret Service now say two of the pages of evidence she brought were fabricated just before the meeting. Tufts hired Imanishi-Kari, where she remains today as an assistant professor in the department pathology.)

O'Toole then went to the dean at MIT, who asked Dr. Herman Eisen, a friend of Baltimore's, to look into the case. Though Eisen was the officially designated investigator at MIT, he never looked at Imanishi-Kari's lab data or her notes. He did not question Imanishi-Kari, O'Toole, or Baltimore. Instead, he quickly read a memo from O'Toole on what was wrong, discussed the matter with the Tufts scientists, and later wrote a report saying that there appeared to be errors in the *Cell* paper and differences in interpretation between Imanishi-Kari and O'Toole, but that this was "the stuff of science," and not misconduct. (Several months ago, in a meeting with scientists at Harvard who continued to be perturbed by the case, Eisen admitted that he did not read O'Toole's memo carefully. He also said he "never believed" the theory behind the part of the paper done by Imanishi-Kari, and so was not particularly concerned with the accuracy of the evidence itself. Such rationalizations could hardly have provided the reassurance the group was looking for.)

Finally, on June 16, 1986, O'Toole herself confronted Baltimore and Imanishi-Kari at a meeting also attended by Eisen and another co-author of the *Cell* paper, David Weaver, a member of Baltimore's lab. She was the only one who brought data to the meeting—seventeen pages from Imanishi-Kari's notes. (Investigators at NIH later said those pages were prima facie evidence of trouble because they showed results opposite from those reported in the paper.) According to O'Toole, Imanishi-Kari admitted at the time what she has come to state publicly: some of the work cited in the paper was not done, and other work got different results than what was reported. At the end of the meeting, O'Toole asked that the paper be corrected or withdrawn. Baltimore replied that such problems with accuracy are not unusual and they need not be corrected—a startling new standard for scientific inquiry.

He said that the scientific process is "self-correcting"—meaning that other scientists will eventually figure out that the published work was wrong. It is true that honest work is often wrong and requires another study to reveal that. But Baltimore was extending the notion of self-correction to cover errors he knew existed but decided not to report. Thus he was dooming some scientist to repeating work that need not be repeated, merely to maintain his own unblemished record.

O'Toole pressed him. He says he told her she could write to *Cell*, but that if she did, he would write his own letter endorsing the paper's results, and that he couldn't imagine they would accept her letter then. O'Toole says that she left the meeting feeling beleaguered and decided to let the matter drop.

However, by July 1986 the case was sniffed out by a pair of self-appointed fraud scouts at NIH, Walter Stewart and Ned Feder. They had heard of the case through the grapevine and began to press O'Toole to give them information about it. Though they have no official status as investigators, the burden of pressing such cases went to them because they were willing to do the work necessary. There is in fact nobody in science directly assigned to study and adjudicate potential cases of misconduct. They also alerted Representative John Dingell, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, who oversees the workings and misworkings of federal agencies. He began his own prolonged inquiry and eventually held two hearings on the case, one in April 1988, the other in April 1989.

In January 1988 Stewart and Feder's work and Dingell's investigation finally prompted the NIH to appoint an official committee to investigate the matter. But at first, and true to form in investigations carried out by scientists, the NIH put two of Baltimore's close associates on the panel, Frederick Alt of Columbia, a co-author with Baltimore on more than a dozen papers, and James Darnell of Rockefeller, co-author on Balti-

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Trials of an Education Consumer

By Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers

Choice is a word with great resonance for Americans because we consider it basic to our definition of freedom. Being free means being able to choose what you believe, what job you want to do, where you want to live and work, what you buy, etc. It's no wonder that the idea of school choice has caught on with a lot of people.

Supporters of school choice are confident that it will create a chain reaction of important changes in our education system. Students will stop patronizing poor schools, and lots of new schools of all different kinds will spring up in response to consumer demand. All this will lead, choice supporters say, to great satisfaction with the schools and a dramatic rise in student achievement.

But these results are almost entirely speculative. In fact, we have very little experience with *public school* choice, which allows parents to choose the public school their children go to, and virtually none with *private school* choice, which would use public money to send children to private schools. And even if choice results in offering education consumers an enormous number of different schools to choose from, is being different the same thing as being better?

In "The Private Hell of Public Education" (*Lear's*, April 1992), writer Bonnie Blodgett talks about what it's like to shop for a school. Blodgett is not an administrator or teacher or member of a union. She's a parent who got to choose where her child would go to school—and decided that there were big problems with the choice process and the assumptions behind it.

When she visited her child's class, it looked like an unsuccessful first grade in an ordinary school.

Blodgett and her husband are the kind of parents choice was created to satisfy—serious and responsible consumers—and St. Paul, where they live, has public school choice. In St. Paul, it is accomplished mostly through an array of magnet schools that were designed to give parents and children lots to choose from. But being a good shopper depends on having good information, and that was the Blodgett's first problem.

The magnet program guide didn't give them much help: "Every school promised to bring out the particular interests and strengths of our child, to build her confidence, character, and social skills. Every school differed in the methods deployed..., but evaluating that difference, whether it was an experimental teaching method or immersion in a particular subject, was difficult." Blodgett's husband observed that the information they got was "about as helpful as the nutrition information you find on the side of a cereal box." But they weren't buying cereal; they were deciding which program out of over two dozen would be best for their child—without really understanding any of them.

For a while they considered a Spanish-language immersion program. It was based on the theory that bilingual children learn better than kids with only one language. But they discarded this idea when they met a parent with a first grader in the program who complained that his kid was having a tough time reading in any language.

Their next choice was a new school that billed itself as a "world model of excellence in curriculum design" and promised "teaching teams ...thoroughly trained in methodologies that incorporate the very best and latest research and practice in human learning and development." They weren't sure they understood what all this meant, but the enthusiasm of the principal and the teachers sold them. Unfortunately, the reality bore little relation to the hype. There didn't seem to be any curriculum, and there were few books. The cross-age groupings, a central feature of the school's philosophy, fell apart and were replaced by groupings according to achievement level. When Blodgett visited her daughter's class one day, it looked like an unsuccessful first grade in an ordinary school: Her kid was asleep at her desk; most of the others were talking and horsing around; a few were listening to the teacher.

The story had a happy ending when their daughter was finally admitted to a school for which she had been wait-listed, but that's not the point. The point, Blodgett believes, is that the consumer model for education is seriously flawed. What does it mean, she asks, to tell parents they can choose from among things they don't understand? And what do all these choices mean anyway? Do they reflect what people know about education? Or are they just strategies for attracting customers?

"The agonizing choice process," Blodgett says, "...left me wondering why I *should* know. I find it inconceivable that nobody out there really knows better than I do what sort of elementary education will work for my child.....Why don't they know whether (or under what conditions) it's good to group kids by age or skill levels? Why don't they know whether having one's own desk is a good thing, an indifferent thing or a bad thing?"

Some people think that Americans want a lot of choice in schools; President Bush and Secretary of Education Alexander are calling for 535 "break-the-mold" schools, no two alike. But maybe people don't want all that choice—and confusion. Maybe they want schools that are not all that different but that achieve the things they think are important: graduates who are prepared for work or college and prepared to live and work together in a multicultural democracy.

This is no defense of our current schools; they aren't working well enough and we must find out what will make them work much better. But when GM wanted to design the Saturn car to beat the Japanese, the company didn't design 535 different Saturn cars; it concentrated on designing *one*. Perhaps we should take a page from GM's book.

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more's very successful textbook on molecular biology. The third panel member, Ursula Storb of the University of Chicago, was later found to have written a letter of recommendation for Imanishi-Kari.

That summer Baltimore began a national campaign designed to derail the NIH and congressional investigations. He attacked O'Toole as a "discontented postdoc" in a letter to the NIH, and he and several friends at MIT orchestrated the writing of letters to more than 400 colleagues in which the investigations were declared to be a threat to science itself. Baltimore at the time was chief of the Whitehead Institute, MIT's molecular biology research institute, as well as a professor at MIT, and he committed tens of thousands of dollars of the institute's money to lobbying, including the hiring of Akin Gump, a high-priced Washington law firm, to press his arguments upon Congress.

Baltimore cast the conflict as one of outsiders invading the sanctuary of science. They were, he said, maliciously misrepresenting a scientific dispute about error as a case of fraud. He appealed to the xenophobia of other researchers in asking them to rally round him. In one letter, a close friend of Baltimore's, MIT's Phillip Sharp, urged his colleagues to write op-ed pieces, and letters to the editor and to Congress. His sample letter to Congress said: "I believe that to continue what many of us perceive to be a vendetta against honest scientists will cost our society dearly. If scientists who have been exonerated of all wrongdoing must continue to defend themselves against vague and shifting charges, all members of the scientific community must be afraid." Robert E. Pollack, dean of Columbia College, did write an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* in which he deplored congressional meddling in science: "The way Dr. Baltimore is being treated means that witch-hunts are in the offing," Pollack declared. "If Congress legislates against error in science, there is no chance that a sensible young person will choose to be a scientist." The number of combatants in the fray grew, until half a dozen Nobel Prize winners and eminent scientists from Stanford, MIT, Harvard, Tufts, and Rockefeller had taken up the cudgels. Baltimore and his lobbyists arranged for a bevy of distinguished scientists to go to Washington on his behalf. They had seats reserved just behind Baltimore at Dingell's second congressional hearing in April 1989, facing Dingell.

David Baltimore was the only source of his colleagues' certainty that the case was one of error and not fraud. But Baltimore himself had not looked at the evidence in detail; in fact, he said it was not his business to look at it. What he did know, at the very least, was that there were false statements in the paper. For example, one of the problems raised in the summer of 1986 was that one of the reagents did not perform as stated in the paper. That September, several months after Eisen had concluded his inquiry into the matter, Baltimore wrote in a letter to him (made public under subpoena): "The evidence that the Bet-1 antibody doesn't do as described in the paper is clear. Thereza's statement to you that she knew it all the time is a remarkable admission of guilt.... Why Thereza chose to use the data and to mislead both of us and those who read the paper is beyond me." More interesting, a few lines later Baltimore admitted choosing to mislead those who read the paper, and he gave a reason why. "All authors do have to take responsibility for a manuscript, so all of us are in a sense culpable, but I would hate to see David's [David Weaver] integrity questioned for something he accepted in good faith.... The literature is full of bits and pieces now known to be wrong, but it is not the tradition to point each one out publicly."

He said that no correction should be published but that he would privately let others know that Imanishi-Kari's data "are not reliable, and I, for one, will be skeptical of Thereza's work in the future." Later Baltimore told the Office of Scientific Integrity that he was not proud of this letter and his decision to advise against a correction and added, implausibly, that probably he and Eisen had misunderstood Imanishi-Kari's explanation of her misdeed. Imanishi-Kari is originally from Brazil and has a mild accent.

When Dingell subpoenaed Imanishi-Kari's notebooks in preparation for the congressional hearings in the spring of 1989, she met with Baltimore and his lawyer Normand Smith. She confided that she really had no notebooks, only loose sheets of paper, spiral-bound pads, and folders. Researchers' notebooks often are not pristine, but when subject to examination they must make sense. What should I do with this mess? she asked. Either Baltimore or Smith—neither will be definite about it—told her to assemble them into a notebook.

On April 25 Dingell's staff invited Baltimore in for a private talk. It was nine days before the hearings were to take place. Dingell's staff had taken the notebooks to the top forensic experts at the Secret Service, who reported that all the signs of outright fraud were there. Dingell's staff felt that if Baltimore got a look at this new data, he might have a chance to regroup, back away, and offer to help resolve the matter. He was told that the Secret Service had found that 20 percent of Imanishi-Kari's notebook material showed evidence of being faked. But Baltimore still didn't back down. In fact, at the hearings he was asked how Imanishi-Kari came to make the notebooks. He replied that he did not know.

The paper and typefaces from mechanical data counters did not match those used in the lab in 1985 when the data was supposed to have been taken. Rather, all the signs matched perfectly data from another time in the lab—several years before, when it would have been impossible for the experiments to have been done. The paper on which the purported data was recorded was a peculiar shade of yellow-green, unlike anything seen in the lab for years.

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And, astonishingly, a number in one of the notebooks was changed, simply whited out both front and back. Dates in Imanishi-Kari's notebook pages were out of order, overwritten, and some were clearly wrong for the experiments represented on the page. Later, when confronted with these by the NIH investigators, Imanishi-Kari said that dates "don't mean anything." Maybe they are not even dates, just numbers. Numbers referring to what? she was asked. "I don't know," she said.

Baltimore was clearly shaken by the meeting. Those present said his color sank, and they feared he would be sick on the spot. But his recovery was quick. In a subsequent meeting that must be considered at the least highly improper, he met with the NIH investigators and with Imanishi-Kari to talk about the testimony they would give before Dingell. For example, when Imanishi-Kari suggested the paper may have gotten discolored by leaving it in the sun, NIH investigator Dr. Hugh McDevitt said that story would not work because they already knew it was not true. He offered the possibility that there was another explanation, one she hadn't suggested yet.

When it came time to testify, Baltimore delivered as remarkable a piece of oratory as a scientist ever did before Congress. "The Secret Service apparently conducted a nine-month forensic analysis of Dr. Imanishi-Kari's laboratory notes," he said. "In a charade of helpfulness, they presented a partial oral summary of their findings on Tuesday, April 25. That presentation was designed to terrify without providing any substance ... last Sunday, some written materials were provided. And based on those and what I have heard today, there is still nothing from the Secret Service investigation that causes me to doubt the validity of the *Cell* paper." Though Baltimore himself had almost single-handedly created the whole spectacle, he went on to chastise Dingell. "I must tell you, Mr. Chairman, I am very troubled about how this situation got so out of hand. I have a very real concern that American science can easily become the victim of this kind of government inquiry.... Professor Imanishi-Kari is also a victim.... She deserves my support, and the support of all scientists, for any of them could be in her shoes."

No one doubts that Baltimore is a brilliant scientist. But those who know him have seen another, more childish David Baltimore in outbursts from time to time. His extraordinary success may also have led him to feel invulnerable—able to deflect personal scandal merely by bringing the weight of his reputation to bear. From his weakness we see the weakness of science: that it is a human enterprise. Its practitioners struggle always against emotion and prejudice, and never fully overcome them.

O'Toole's plight illustrates the dangers in a hierarchical system where a scientist is inaudible to all those above her rank. When she made her charges, the senior scientists turned and spoke to one another. Eisen talked to Baltimore, Tufts to MIT. Later, when Stewart, Feder, and Dingell joined in, they likewise carried no particular status in science. Baltimore and others even chose to contradict the forensic experts at the Secret Service, who surely know their business.

O'Toole, who is now working at the Genetics Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, after a long hiatus in which no one in the field would hire her, believes that the only way to avoid another Baltimore case is to have the investigations of such matters open and public. Other scientists have had a similar response. Dr. Walter Gilbert, a Nobel Prize winner in molecular biology from Harvard, says: "Some of us are just aghast at David's behavior. Through his own doing, the case became a dramatic test of power between the Congress and the scientific establishment. It became a case of how science should be supported and reviewed. He tried to make it a test case, rather than say, 'I'm sorry,' and walk away, or, as any scientist should, say that if the work was wrong he would be responsible and withdraw it." The case, Gilbert says, has proved to be a healthy reminder to scientists "that lab notebooks are open documents, that all the authors on a paper are responsible for it. Fact-finding must be done vigorously and impartially, rather than by the friends of the person involved. What has not been healthy is the failure of the institutions—both the universities and the NIH—to investigate quickly and thoroughly."

But the Baltimore case echoes something deeper in the scientific world than mere secretive procedures and mutual, collegial protection. It reveals something about the nature of the scientific mind itself. The key to science, the physicist Richard Feynman wrote, is "a kind of scientific integrity, a principle of scientific thought that corresponds to a kind of utter honesty—a kind of leaning over backwards. For example, if you're doing an experiment, you should report everything that you think might make it invalid—not only what you think is right about it." These are exacting standards, and ones that human beings—with all their propensity for pride, vanity, and ambition—regularly fail to live by. For too long scientists—and the society that supports them—have believed that they are somehow immune to these imperfections, that their professional integrity should therefore be placed beyond the troubling, open, sometimes misplaced scrutiny of a liberal democracy. The last few years should prove beyond any doubt that those scientists are all too human and that such scrutiny is all too often merited.

David Baltimore clearly failed as a scientist—through his carelessness, his willful oversight, and his extraordinary attempts to protect his own reputation at the expense of a conscientious young colleague. In the end, Baltimore inadvertently revealed just how vulnerable the scientific profession is to abuse by those entrusted to protect it. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Around the Globe

Jim Jarmusch, says the publicity, "resists the notion that his films are necessarily becoming more conventional." In rhetoric this is called prolepsis—anticipating an argument with a prior response. Jarmusch's new film **Night on Earth** (Fine Line) explains why he may be uneasy. I can't comment on "necessarily" in the quotation above, but certainly *Night on Earth* departs from the heterodoxy of *Stranger Than Paradise, Down by Law,* and *Mystery Train.* Those taciturn films seemed to hover around their people, rather than enclose them; they not only dealt with offbeat subjects, they implicitly mocked the way conventional filmmakers might have handled those subjects. Not so *Night on Earth.*

Its very form is a formula. We catch the glint of the cookie-cutter as we recall earlier uses of the pattern. In this case, it's five sequences with five taxi drivers in five cities around the United States and Europe. In *If I Had a Million,* 1932 (to name just one), there are several episodes in each of which someone is suddenly handed a million dollars.

Qualms are not calmed by Jarmusch's first shot, a globe rotating in space, followed by a close-up of a map that we move across to the first locale, Los Angeles. A small light goes on in the map when we get there. Additionally, we see a bank of five clocks showing the time in our five prospective settings. (This whole process is repeated between episodes.) We want to hope that Jarmusch is kidding with all this corn. But he isn't.

The five sequences—sketches, really—do add up to a technical challenge: how to shoot a lot of scenes inside taxis and yet avoid visual tedium. This challenge Jarmusch meets well enough, but the very fact that he set himself this challenge is itself a move toward a more head-on, less oblique form of filming. The closest that the film comes to heterodoxy is in the shapes of the sketches: none of them builds to a conventional payoff. But then none of them is markedly affecting even in a sidewise, eccentric way.

In L.A. an actors' agent (Gena Rowlands) takes a taxi, is struck by the character and look of her driver (Winona Ryder), and offers to make her a star; but the driver says her ambition is to be a mechanic. In New York the driver is an East German immigrant (Armin Mueller-Stahl) who gets involved with his black passenger (Giancarlo Esposito) and his sister-in-law (Rosie Perez), both of them linguistically sulfurous, and the driver chuckles his way to greater knowledge of his new country. The third sketch, in Paris, is about a driver from the Ivory Coast (Isaach de Bankolé); he picks up a blind young woman (Beatrice Dalle) who soon trashes his compassion. In Rome a driver (Roberto Benigni of *Down by Law*) has a priest as a passenger and insists on confessing as he drives—with dire effect on the priest. The last sketch is in Helsinki: a driver picks up three workmen who have been carousing to anesthetize the anguish of one of the group, just fired. The driver tells them of his own woes and shames them into silence.

Two performances are outstanding. Benigni is outstandingly skilled, an experienced stand-up comic (here sitting down) who knows how to entertain. Rowlands is outstandingly amateurish, as usual, a woman nerving herself up to appear at ease but who never quite makes it.

Frederick Elmes, previously a cinematographer for David Lynch, shot this film in excellent color, from the late afternoon of L.A. to the wintry dawn in Helsinki. But what's a Jarmusch film doing in excellent color? No one would want to confine Jarmusch to repeating his first films, but when he changes, we hope to see *him* changing, not a new and lesser man taking over. If the young Godard had signed with 20th Century-Fox, a picture like *Night on Earth* might have been the result.

In Russian "*raspad*" means "collapse." **Raspad** (MK2) is the title of Mikhail Belikov's film about the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. Belikov is a Ukrainian who lives in Kiev, seventy miles from Chernobyl, and he's an experienced filmmaker: *Raspad* was the logical result of both facts. While the film was being shot in 1989, an American film person visiting Kiev became interested; through him, all the post-production work was done at George Lucas's facilities in California.

By now everyone knows that we will never know the whole story of Chernobyl—why it happened, what its full effects were then and later, what its even later effects will be. But knowing that we will never know is, in itself, knowing enough—enough for unshakable chill. Belikov is out to frighten us further, and

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Casablanca. *Reissued for its fiftieth anniversary, it shows why it has survived fifty years. (Reviewed 5/4/92)* **Howards End.** *The adaptation of Forster does him no disservice, and the acting—especially by Vanessa Redgrave, Emma Thompson, and Anthony Hopkins—is glorious. A gem. (3/23/92)* **JFK.** *Now it's a hit in Japan! With its (significant) virtues and (significant) flaws, it is something more than a worldwide success—it's a necessary experience. (1/27/92)* **Noises Off.** *Not a hit, I've heard. Pity. This farce about the rehearsal and performance of a farce has more laughs than that premise might suggest. Michael Caine scintillates. (4/20/92)* **—SK**

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the best aspect of his film is that he succeeds, both in his re-creation of the accident and of his government's efforts to suppress or minimize the news.

The weaker parts of *Raspad* are the fictional elements that Belikov and his co-writer, Oleg Prihodko, have woven around the cataclysm. For instance, a Kiev journalist returns from a trip to find that his wife has been unfaithful; the shock of this discovery is poised against the disaster, which occurs at the same time. More, this story begins and ends with stock Russian (or Ukrainian) sequences in which sodden people sit around a dinner table, listening to a mournful song while they contemplate their souls.

Only one of the fictional strands has power. A pair of newlyweds steal away from their wedding party and motorcycle off to a forest where they spend a blissful night in a tent, then wake in the morning to see men in protective outfits stalking through the woods and putting up a contamination-warning sign.

But the factual matters are horrific, much more so than the American films and TV shows about nuclear disaster, because *Raspad* is about something that actually happened. Besides the explosions and flames and immediate deaths, Belikov lays in terrible touches: an oceanic mass of frightened people (5,000 extras) in the Kiev railway station; a helicopter flight over the city of Pripyat where most of the Chernobyl workers lived, one high-rise apartment project after another, all utterly deserted.

The arguments in favor of nuclear energy are familiar and, as arguments, are reasonable. The traditional energy sources are limited, more expensive, and carry their own environmental hazards. But human error, not exactly eliminated in the nuclear age, entails quite different results in nuclear plants. A recent "Nightline" program discussed the sorry safety conditions in many Eastern European nuclear energy plants—without assuming that such plants elsewhere, though better built and monitored, are risk-free. That program, *Raspad,* Chernobyl itself underscore that there is no such thing as a "national" nuclear accident. •

Homage to Catalonia

BY JONATHAN BROWN

Barcelona
by Robert Hughes

(Knopf, 575 pp., $27.50)

In the early 1960s learning to love Barcelona required, among other things, an act of will. The city was not, on its surface, attractive; its charms lay hidden beneath a dowdy, scruffy appearance. The heavy hand laid on the city by Franco after the Civil War stifled even the modicum of liberty essential for urban culture to thrive.

Still, lovers of art, who often have more porous political consciences than other members of the intelligentsia, were better served by Barcelona than the casual tourist. (Many Americans still harbored intense feelings about the Civil War and refused to set foot in Spain.) The Old Quarter, known as the Barri Gòtic, with its medieval cathedral and houses, was richly atmospheric and pungently aromatic; the plumbing, like the architecture, was centuries old, and the genteel, antiseptic charms of gentrification still lay some twenty years in the future. Informed travelers could next make their way to the Museu d'Art de Catalunya on Montjüic to study the fabulous Romanesque mural paintings, which fortunately had been removed from the small churches in the Catalan countryside and thus spared the ravages of time and the fury of anarchists. The museum was almost always empty, and it was easy to be overpowered by those out-sized, wide-eyed twelfth-century divinities.

This artistic itinerary was exceptional in one respect: it listed no monuments created between the late Middle Ages and the middle of the nineteenth century. Of course, life did not cease in Barcelona during those 350 years. Something worse happened: the city fell under the power of the central government in Madrid, which alternately ignored, exploited, or repressed it, reducing it to the status of a small, provincial city. When at last Barcelona began to re-emerge as a thriving center for commerce and industry in the 1850s, and money was available for new build-

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ing projects, architects cast a nostalgic eye toward the last great epoch in Catalan history, the period from the mid-twelfth century to the end of the fourteenth century, when the region was an important Mediterranean power.

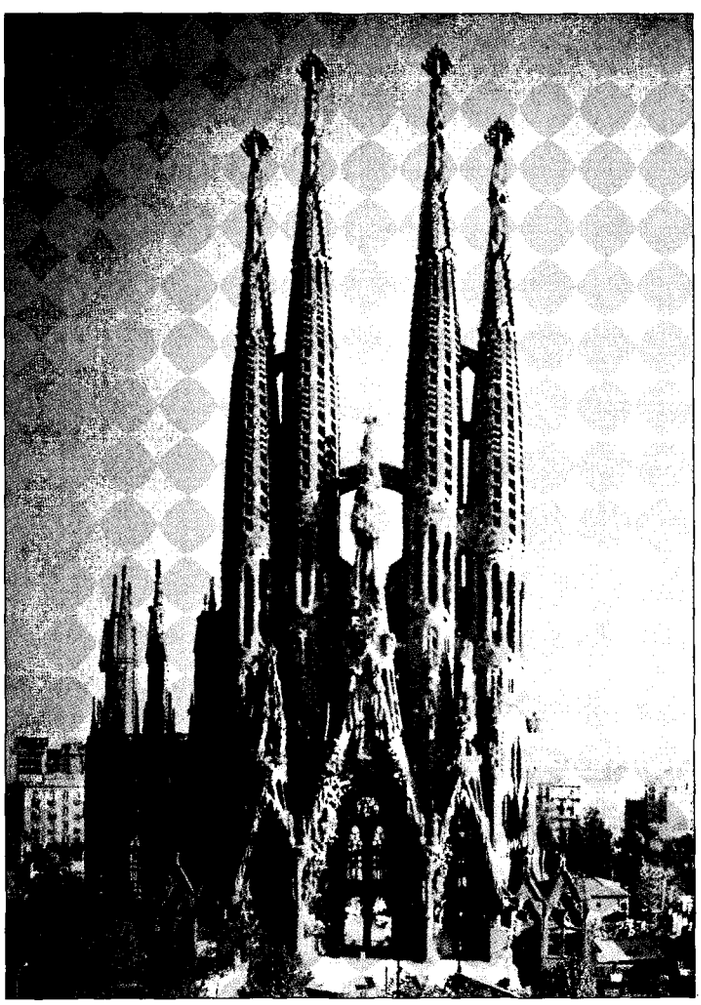
The splendid buildings that arose during the Catalan renaissance, or Renaixença, are thus situated at the crossroads between art and regional nationalism. They are as complex as they are compelling. And these were the buildings that aroused the enthusiasm of the youthful Robert Hughes, who claims, as an Australian, an innate affinity for what he calls the provincial. The act of will needed to see beneath the tatty surface of Barcelona in the 1960s was almost second nature to him, and he was launched on a long-term engagement with the city that is once again known, not least as the host to this year's Olympic Games, throughout the world.

The Olympics notwithstanding, Hughes's book is hardly a *pièce d'occasion*. It is most accurately described as a sustained essay in cultural history organized around what architects call the "built environment." As Hughes observes:

> The political and economic history of Barcelona is written all over its plans and buildings, and one cannot begin to understand Catalan architecture—particularly that of the nineteenth century, when it was such a forceful expression of national aspiration—without the image bank of local identity that lay behind it.

The issue of local identity looms large in Hughes's book, as it is beginning to do in historical studies in general. It is logical to suppose that the renewal of interest in the regional and the local is linked to the major geopolitical changes of the last decade: the projected unification of Western Europe has made its inhabitants more aware of what they perceive to be their historical differences, which are threatened with extinction by the emergence of a new megastate; and the disintegration of the old and vast megastate to the east has really let the cat of nationalism out of the bag.

The keen new interest in the subject must be owed also to currents of politics and culture that are sweeping aside the presuppositions of established ideologies. In the United States, this movement assumes the guise of multiculturalism, but something comparable is being played out in many corners of the globe, as previously peripheral, marginalized, or suppressed groups vie for political and cultural power. And last, and maybe least, there is the reaction abroad to the emergence of a "world culture," which is experienced beyond our borders as a homogenization, or more precisely, a great Americanization. (Consider only the recent howls of local pain at the inauguration of Euro Disneyland near Paris, and the attendant fear for the fate of the Astérix theme park.)



LA SAGRADA FAMILIA, ANTONI GAUDÍ, BEGUN 1882

Myths of origin and cults of authenticity, in short, are returning to favor. Duly sanitized of their association with the darkest moments of Western history, and presented with conviction, these things can have an enormous appeal, as Ronald Reagan showed during the two terms of his presidency. It is still too soon to identify the effects of the new local identities with any confidence, but as far as the visual arts are concerned, one consequence is clear. More and more, art historians are questioning the "canon," that rather exclusive group of artists and works of art that are used as the benchmark for measuring aesthetic and cultural quality.

In the modern criticism of art, the charge of provincialism has always been a grave one. It is commonly assumed that the cosmopolitan is more innovative, more valuable, more challenging, in short, that it is better. This exclusivism is now being questioned, and recognition of other art, recognition without condescension, is now being demanded. The situation in the visual arts hasn't yet attained the sophistication and the shrillness of contemporary literary studies, in which received notions of excellence are being subjected to a hostile analysis, often from a political standpoint, that attempts to expose the ideological content presumed to be latent in the concept of the masterpiece. In the visual arts, the outcome of the struggle over who controls the definition of excellence is still far from clear; but it may be that the definition will be usefully enlarged by the new points of regard. In this respect, the genuinely open-minded study of local identity exemplified by Hughes's book gives one grounds for hope.

As Hughes is quick to say in his preface, his book is not scholarly or academic. Its essential information is derived from secondary sources, which are cited in the bibliography. Its strengths are to be found, rather, in its author's engaging style of writing, his keen and concise analysis of particular works of art, his ability to sustain an engaging point of view over more than 500 pages of text (which are illustrated, unfortunately, with deficient reproductions). By now Hughes is renowned as the master of an informal but analytically penetrating prose style that catches the cadence of his speech (at least as it comes across on television) and his penchant for earthy colloquialisms. He is an extremely congenial guide through almost two

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millennia of Catalan history.

His point of entry determines his slant on his subject. During the last twenty-five years, the fame of Barcelona as a thriving artistic center in the late nineteenth century has grown. The names of Gaudí and Picasso, the latter of whom started his career in the city, are proof enough that Barcelona was no run-of-the-mill town, even if textiles were the principal industry; and around these stars clustered lesser but still radiant lights, who constituted the constellation called *modernisme*. The architects Lluis Domènech i Montaner and Josep Puig i Cadafalch designed some of the most flamboyant and inventive buildings of the period, which only recently have been lovingly restored. Domènech's Palau de la Música Catalana, a concert hall completed in 1908 for the Orfeó Català, a choral society, is a Wagnerian opera in three dimensions, swarming with surface energy, overladen with nationalistic symbolism. The Casa Amatller by Puig, now home to an institute of art history, performs an inventive *modernista* turn on the Gothic style so beloved by these architects.

The artists who made up the group known as Els Quatre Gats also have come in for a share of glory. Els Quatre Gats was a beer hall started by four painters, Pere Romeu, Ramón Casas, Santiago Rusinyol, and Miquel Utrillo. Part fraternity house, part artists' club, it was the center of Barcelona's Bohemia, and the place where Picasso used to hang out. His reputation overshadows Casas and Rusinyol, of course, but they were very good artists indeed. They were in Paris in the 1890s and sampled the various brands of modernism, which they transformed into an authentic medium for interpreting the peculiar culture of their native city.

The renascence of high-level artistic activity in a city where it had long and conspicuously been lacking is the phenomenon that Hughes seeks to understand. As he puts it, "So much of what was built in Barcelona in the late nineteenth century was grounded in a strong, even obsessive, sense of the Catalan past, in particular its medieval past, that there was little point in trying to describe the newer without the older." Accordingly, his book is divided into two roughly equal parts. "The Old City" is a fast-paced historical travelogue covering the first 1,850 years of the existence of Barcelona and Catalunya, the surrounding region of northeastern Spain, bordered by the Pyrenees to the north and the Mediterranean to the east. This is designed to set the stage for the densely woven narrative of "The New City," which is more tangled and more ambitious.

The long, initial phase of Barcelona's history can be described as an arduous climb up to a peak of glory, followed by a quick slide into a valley of obscurity. Though it was settled by the Romans, Barcelona did not begin to be significant until the twelfth century. In 1137, to be exact, Catalunya merged with the adjacent kingdom of Aragón, forming a solid block of territory and power, and spilling over into Roussillon. Barcelona was the capital of this new state. During the reign of Jaume I (1213-76), the kingdom of Aragón launched the expansion of an empire eastward as far as Constantinople, building a trading network that brought great prosperity to the region.

New wealth, however tainted by cupidity and egoism, tends to be favorable for the arts. The building activity that occurred in Barcelona during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries offers yet another proof of that proposition. Hughes claims that "Barcelona's Barri Gòtic still contains the most concentrated array of thirteenth- to fifteenth-century buildings in Spain and, not discounting even Venice, the most completed in Europe." While the citizens of Toledo, not to mention the citizens of Bruges, might wish to let some

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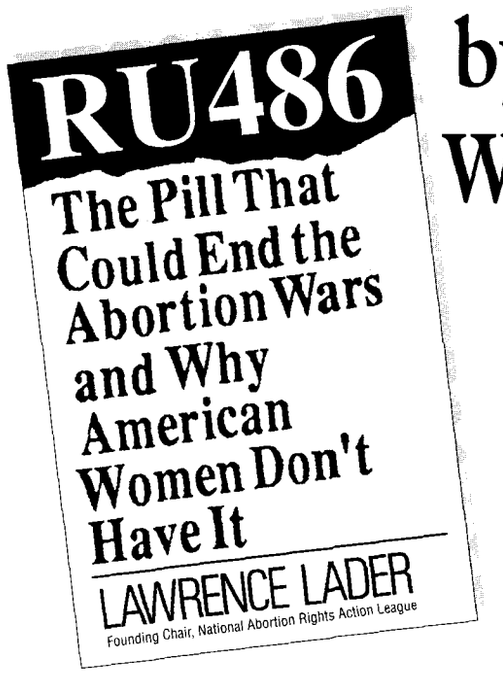
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air out of that statement, it is not quite puffery. The Barri Gòtic may not contain many famous monuments, but the variety of its surviving structures, as Hughes notes, is remarkable: "parish churches, town houses, government buildings, council halls, guild headquarters, industrial structures and, of course, the Cathedral."

The analysis of architectural monuments, here and elsewhere in the book, leaves no doubt of Hughes's vocation. While his historical discussions do conquer the summits of *haute vulgarisation*, his engagement with works of art generates observations that are fresh, telling, and comprehensible. His description of the sturdy and no-nonsense Catalan Gothic architecture, for example, does not require initiation into a special language of art criticism:

> No matter how secure Barcelona felt, no matter how impregnable it was, its church architects obdurately kept the image of the fortress in their minds. No matter how high, long, or wide their buildings were, they retain a ghost memory of the cave, the strong troglodytic God-shelters of the Pyrenees, of Catalunya Vella.

Hughes employs the Catalan language to refer to the names of people and places of the region. Spanish would be unthinkable, even for a writer with Hughes's impatience with the politically correct. Catalan is an independent Romance language, but more to the point, it is independent from Spanish, which is derived from a more formal, cultivated Latin. Yet Catalan has only sporadically been used as a literary language, which explains its second-class status compared with other Romance languages, despite the fact that it made a splendid start. It is certainly no coincidence that the foundations of literary Catalan were laid as the Gothic buildings were rising. The central figures are Ramon Llull (c. 1235-1316), one of the greatest medieval philosophers, and the troubadour poet Ausiàs March (c. 1397-1459). After this moment of glory, however, written Catalan virtually disappeared until the nineteenth century, as a consequence of the collapse of the Kingdom of Aragón as an independent nation.

The history of the decline of Catalunya during the fifteenth century appeals mostly to students of economics and political factionalism, and clearly Hughes is not one of their number. As the first golden age of Catalunya draws to a close, the pace of his narrative accelerates to blinding speed; and after the dust settles, Ferdinand of Aragón has married Isabella of Castile, a union that made Catalunya the junior partner in the future development of Spain. From the first, the Union of Crowns was a misalliance. Castile, which then comprised all of the Iberian Peninsula except Portugal and Aragón, was a society ascending, and soon it would be the center of a world empire. In this order of things, Aragón (which in historical terms always includes the principality of Catalunya) became an appendage, denied the fruits of the Spanish monarchy but expected to contribute men and money to its wars.

The history of Catalunya over the next three centuries, mercilessly condensed to its essentials, is the history of futile attempts to escape this exploitation by the government in Madrid, which bypassed local civic institutions and ruled through a viceroy. It is also the story of the fitful progress and eventual success of the Catalan economy, which culminated in the late nineteenth century with the enrichment of a handful of manufacturers and the exploitation of their workers. The second golden age of art in Barcelona was created when these makers of money joined forces with makers of myths.

In the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, Catalunya discovered its soul, that is, its language, its history, and its folkways, in the Renaixença. The Renaixença was one of many movements of regional nationalism that swept Europe in the nineteenth century. (It is a force that, after several decades of dormancy, is again becoming significant: there are now said to be forty-two regional movements in Western Europe alone.) According to Eric Hobsbawm, a keen student of the phenomenon, regional nationalists staked their claim to nationhood on two points—language and ethnicity, which were mixed together in a powerful cocktail of patriotism.

Nothing seems more natural or spontaneous than patriotism, but nothing is more susceptible to manipulation. At the heart of regional nationalism is the rewriting of history; a careful selection is made of events that lend themselves to the exaltation of a political program and its proponents. Thus mythologized, the past, at once remote and proximate, can be used to advance a wide range of nationalistic aspirations. Nationalism also demands a repertory of symbols, which run the gamut from flags to statues of the founders and heroes of the nation, and this is where artists get into the act. Of course, patriotic art is most often associated with its extreme manifestations, as exemplified by Soviet realism, Nazi neoclassicism, and (we are now being told) representations of the Amer-

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ican West. Still, it need not be so coarse or so blatant, as Hughes nicely demonstrates by situating the architectural masterpieces of *modernisme* in the politics of the Renaixença.

The search for the artistic roots of the Catalan soul could lead only to one place—the Barri Gòtic, the Gothic past, one of the key points in the mythology of Catalan history. Architects of the modernist school interpreted the Gothic with varying degrees of liberty, as was only to be expected. Domènech, a flamboyant designer, kept up with the latest developments in Paris; Puig, a devoted and pioneering student of Catalan medieval art, was more archaeological in approach. Gaudí was another medievalizer, and the only member of the group who saw through the skin of the Gothic style to its structural achievements, as evinced in the amazing crypt for the chapel of the Colonia Güell.

Gaudí's last work, the unfinished church of the Sagrada Familia, has become the most famous *modernista* building, and it is now routinely used to promote the image of Barcelona. Yet it was commissioned, as Hughes explains, by a right-wing religious organization that carried the ideas of the Renaixença to an extreme of pious xenophobia. (Its leader even refused to eat French food, the sure sign of a twisted mind.) The familiar, spiky towers of the Sagrada Familia were designed, in other words, to be minarets of antimodernism. No wonder that construction stopped with the death of the architect, whose own views by then were not far removed from those of his patrons. The misguided souls who are now bending every effort to complete the church have no more sense of history than of taste.

Hughes's lucid account of *modernista* architecture raises the question of regional or national style not only politically, but also analytically. What exactly are such styles? How do they come into being? At any moment, works of art emanating from a given region assume common characteristics; this is what makes it possible for a trained eye to distinguish, often at a glance, a Renaissance painting done in Italy from one done in Flanders, or even a Florentine work from a Sienese work. With good reason, however, the study of the formation and the character of national styles has been treated with circumspection. Too often the explanations of these aesthetic and cultural phenomena have fallen into the trap set by the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, that is to say, into the belief that the inhabitants of a certain region are innately imbued with spiritual characteristics that endure over time. In Spain, for example, the term *invariantes castizos* has been used to describe the unchanging essence of the Spanish character, which is manifest in everything that is truly Spanish. Such sweeping and tendentious definitions only flatten or eliminate the constantly changing responses of artists to new ideas and circumstances, and thus they have precisely the opposite consequence from the one they intend: they impoverish the artistic history of the people that they wish to glorify. They reduce history to propaganda.

Hughes's enthusiastic but untendentious book, though it has no theoretical pretensions whatsoever, provides an excellent example of the study of a regional style by what might be called a circumstantial approach. It involves the study of the creation of cultural identity within historically coherent blocks of time and geographically finite spaces. Within these parameters, the local roots of works of art can be identified, which in turn allows a much more precise definition of their special characteristics. And these limitations severely inhibit or make altogether impossible the process of mythologization by which framers of regional identity seek to glorify themselves and their kind.

The architecture of *modernisme* offers a

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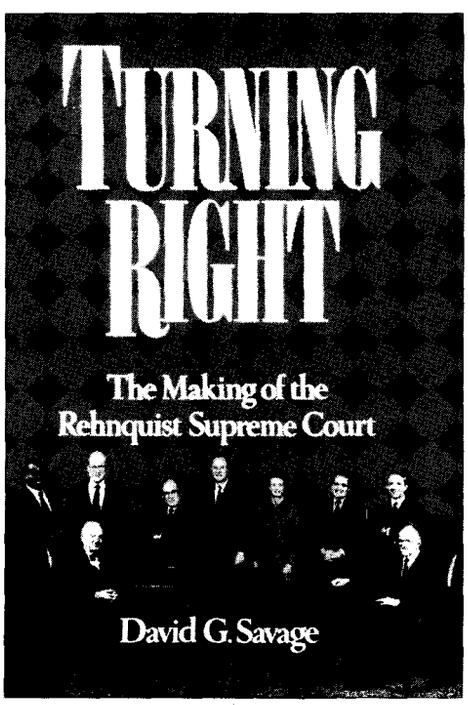

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clear-cut demonstration of the value of such an approach. Although broadly classified as an art-nouveau style, it is easily distinguishable from other manifestations of this international style, from the original art nouveau in Paris, from the Secession movements in Vienna, Berlin, and Munich, from the work of Mackintosh in Scotland, and also from the Arts and Crafts Movement in the United States. These differences, as Hughes explains, can be traced to the Renaixença and its program to construct a sense of nationhood by exalting the language and medieval past of Catalunya.

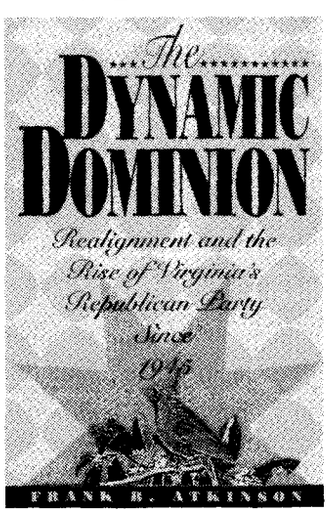
The founders and the proponents of this movement in the early decades of the nineteenth century belonged to the middle and upper-middle classes, the social groups that tend to sponsor regional movements. (The lower classes have nothing to gain, and the upper classes have too much to lose, from patriotic movements, especially those with separatist ambitions.) By mid-century the Renaixença had entered the arena of public awareness through such vehicles as the Orfeó Català and the Jocs Florales, or Floral Games, an annual literary competition modeled on a medieval antecedent, which tried to elevate the values of eternal Catalunya through the medium of bad poetry.

In the 1880s the ideas of the Renaixença began to percolate up the social scale, and this gave the architects their opportunity. Patrons such as Eusebi Güell, the richest man in Barcelona, employed Gaudí to adapt the Renaixença to the tastes of the carriage trade. Medievalism was à la mode, and therefore it was taken by the *modernistas* as malleable clay for their inspired flights of imagination. The sumptuous interiors of the palaces that they built on the fashionable Passeig de Gracia also betrayed the influence of the movement, particularly in the use of ironwork, long a speciality of the regional craftsmen. But there austerity stopped: the fixtures and furnishings created for the residences of Barcelona's new rich are ostentatious *objets de luxe*.

Modernisme is an art of excess, art nouveau run wonderfully wild—and it is a fine demonstration of what often happens when cosmopolitan art hits the provinces. Although Hughes has often defended elitism in the arts, most recently in his lectures at the New York Public Library, he is keeping an open mind after all. In his preface, he observes approvingly that the "focus of cultural interest seems bound to follow the political shift and address itself to the local, the particular, the non-mainstream." And his book is offered as an admiring study of a "culture that was, from the point of view of the larger capitals, 'provincial.'"

Hughes's study of Barcelona proves that elitism need not be the same thing as intolerance, that the sympathetic study of regional art can open eyes and minds to forms of artistic expression that are not taken seriously by the guardians of quality. It is pointless, for example, to compare a Baroque church in Rome with a Baroque church in Puebla or Lima, if the standard of excellence is to be defined by the examples of Bernini and Borromini. Spanish Colonial architecture is a quaint enigma in the English-speaking world because there is no available critical method for interpreting its chromatic, exuberant, sensuous style. Is it all bad? Is it all good? How do you distinguish levels of quality? Nor does it occur to anyone to look at the Roman Baroque from the Latin American perspective, which would probably regard Borromini's famous church of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane as cold, abstract, and colorless.

"There are two ways of disliking art, Ernest," wrote Oscar Wilde in *The Critic as Artist*. "One is to dislike it. The other, to like it rationally." This admonition to cultural relativists may seem apposite,



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but it was made by a snob and a dandy, smugly convinced of the rightness of his own taste. Culturally at least, the world has become a bigger place, and a more interesting place for those who are willing to consider new criteria of judgment. Those new criteria are now being contested; but the canon is not as vulnerable to this contest as some of its defenders fear. It seems safe to predict, at least about the visual arts, that as the furor subsides, the canon will have been expanded, and to the benefit of all concerned. A non-doctrinaire approach to art through the study of local identities, which will employ notions from anthropology as well as social, religious, economic, and political history, need not mean the end of excellence.

Robert Hughes's book is an elitist's study of a provincial culture, but that is not quite the contradiction that it appears to be. Indeed, the fact that Hughes's book is not divided against itself may be its most lasting lesson. Among its many other virtues, *Barcelona* itself demonstrates a credible way out of the cloisters of the canon, or rather a credible way of introducing scanted but worthy objects into it.

JONATHAN BROWN is a professor at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts and a writer on Spanish art.

Society's Child

BY ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE

Life Itself: Abortion in the American Mind by Roger Rosenblatt

(Random House, 208 pp., $20)

Who would have suspected, twenty years ago, that the availability of legal abortion would be dividing Americans more sharply than ever? In retrospect, it is clear that *Roe* v. *Wade* marked the beginning, rather than the end, of a protracted war. Polls taken in 1968, that is, five years before the decision, reveal much more permissive attitudes than those taken after it, and polls taken during the past seven years reveal further decline in support. In 1991 a Gallup Poll found that 42 percent of those asked would favor the overturning of *Roe* v. *Wade*, an increase of 8 percent in only two years.

The loudest, most insistent voices have been raised by those who demand total access to abortion or the total prohibition of it. Each side, or most of each side, frames the issue as an absolute, and asserts that it is defending a fundamental and inalienable right: the right to life of the fetus or the right of the individual woman to her own body. Neither side, or most of neither side, can accept even a modest compromise. Those who traffic in sacred truths and absolute rights must regard compromise as a betrayal.

According to Roger Rosenblatt, however, the majority of Americans are loath to take sides, or loath to accept the militants' simplifications of the issues. For whereas 73 percent of Americans polled in 1990 favored the right to abortion, 77 percent regarded abortion as "some form of murder," ranging from outright murder of another human being to a taking of life. Rosenblatt concludes that in fact most Americans have deeply mixed minds about abortion. And this ambiguity prevents us from resolving either the differences between the militants or the conflicts within our own minds. Under these conditions, it must seem like the beginning of wisdom to accept ambiguity, to talk about it candidly, to be prepared for divisions among ourselves and against ourselves.

Rosenblatt has written a thoughtful essay on a troubling topic. As much a personal reflection on the American character as a discussion of abortion, it does not rely on such conventional forms of evidence as scholarly treatises and statistical analyses. Instead it offers the informed thinking of an experienced observer of American life. In the first of his four chapters, Rosenblatt presents his assessment of the state of the debate. In the second, he sketches in broad strokes the 4,000-year history of abortion, with the aim of underscoring the anomalous quality of the American experience. In the third, he speculates about the qualities of American life that have made the issue of abortion so highly charged. And in the fourth, finally, he draws upon his interviews in Iowa, which he views as the quintessential embodiment of middle America, to

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underscore his main conclusion, namely that the only reasonable way Americans can live with their ambiguity is by simultaneously permitting but discouraging abortion.

Rosenblatt, again, does not aspire to the condition of social science. That is laudable. He seems to have Tocquevillean aspirations; and his book abounds with interesting generalizations about the individual and the community in American life. Occasionally acknowledging the difficulties of generalization, Rosenblatt practices it with enthusiasm. Still, in tone and in substance, his own views on abortion, which he forthrightly lays out at the start, undermine his urbane and reflective posture.

He is, as he puts it, "conventionally pro-choice: Every woman in America, in my opinion, ought to have the legal right to choose an abortion, and abortion ought to be funded by the government so that poor women are not put at an additional disadvantage." He does not believe that a satisfactory compromise with this position is possible. The "modifications of parental consent or parental notification, now the law in several states, seem to me only to whittle away at a woman's—that is, an American's—basic private freedom of choice." Later in the book, he adds that his position does not depend upon "whether or not the fetus is a person; I am ready to concede that a fetus is some form of person. I simply believe that our social priorities require that abortion be permitted."

The language is instructive, and it neutralizes the very complexity that Rosenblatt sets out to interpret. A fetus is some form of person, social priorities require that abortion be permitted: in this sequence he moves abruptly away from the particularity of a person to the abstraction of social priorities and to the passive construction of abortion's "being permitted." Since he fails to define the social priorities that dictate even a grudging acceptance of abortion, he also fails to identify who exactly does the "permitting." Rosenblatt's misunderstanding of the sensibilities of those who oppose abortion is revealed in this glide from the personalization of the fetus to the depersonalization of abortion. For if a fetus is, however marginally, some form of person, then the termination of a pregnancy is a person's killing.

The issue from the pro-life perspective is not whether to permit one or another surgical procedure; it is whether to acknowledge the right of one person to kill another. Rosenblatt knows that the pro-life forces view abortion as murder, but he cannot bring himself to credit the depth and the sincerity of that particular conviction. He does not even take their position seriously enough to challenge the willingness of some pro-lifers to tolerate abortion in cases of rape and incest (at the expense of great intellectual inconsistency: if the fetus is a living being then the conditions of its conception in no way affect its inherent status), and the hesitation of most pro-lifers to advocate the same punishments for those who commit abortion as for those who commit murder.

Instead he implicitly treats the pro-life conviction as anomalous. Thus he argues, from the perspective of the span of human history, that most societies in most centuries have simultaneously deplored the killing of fetuses and more or less openly tolerated the practice of abortion. Abortion, he muses, "seems to exist in history as an omnipresent problem that becomes controversial from time to time, when the rules of society and the needs of individuals are at odds." The history of attitudes toward abortion evidences no significant development, and the questions that framed those attitudes 4,000 years ago continue to frame it today. All that changes across time and across cultures are "variables" such as "religion, social structure, forms of government, and prevalent philosophies."

Only those! And what else, pray, differentiates one civilization from another, one political morality from another? Rosenblatt's bewilderment about the passionate character of the American struggle over abortion rests on a misunderstanding of the historical record. He is right to dwell on the unique hold of individualism on the American imagination. But he does not reflect deeply on the historical novelty of the relation between American individualism and the battle over abortion. For, prior to the late eighteenth century in western Europe and the United States (and later elsewhere around the globe), the individual enjoyed few rights and precious little ideological standing as an individual.

Since the late eighteenth century, the tendency of our society has been to extend the benefits of the status of individual to increasing numbers of people, first to propertyless men, then to slaves, and eventually to women. In such a context, the intensity of pro-life fervor could plausibly be interpreted as a logical next step in the growing attention to the rights of even the most vulnerable and dependent individuals, the ones in the process of becoming. That is not, of course, how pro-choice forces understand it. Rather than seeing the pro-life campaign as a new chapter in a continuing crusade for moral progress, they see it as a repressive and retrograde defense of the oppression of women.

The war over abortion is exposing an abiding disagreement among Americans about the relation between morality and politics, and about the nature of morality itself. From the pro-choice perspective, woman's right to choice amounts to its own moral imperative, resting on the assumption that for women fully to enjoy the status of individuals they must enjoy the same degree of autonomy as men; Rosenblatt uncritically accepts this assumption, regularly referring to an "individual's" choice to terminate a pregnancy or to carry it to term. This neutral language is a new thing, that is, a modern thing, and itself represents a profound change between our way of considering this question and the ways of the societies that preceded us; and it utterly obfuscates the main issue, namely whether women, who have the capacity to bear children, can ever be identical as individuals to men, who do not have that capacity. And *that* is not an issue that can be waved away.

At its most extreme, pro-choice rhetoric suggests that the obligation to carry an unplanned pregnancy to term constitutes a political injustice, a kind of deprivation of civil liberty. The lack of freedom to terminate a pregnancy at will thus amounts to a form of oppression of women by men. Certainly Rosenblatt suggests as much when he insists that men have always decided if, and on what terms, abortion will be available. "Whatever happens to abortion in this country, men will make it happen, even though they may not suffer the anguish or the consequences that attend the act." So in resisting this oppression women should be understood to be resisting, in effect, a form of enslavement. Surely they should not be required passively to suffer under the tyrant's heel. Surely freedom from such oppression is each woman's individual right.

For all his interest in the aspect of eternity, Rosenblatt fails to distance himself critically from the individualistic moral assumptions of his own culture. In his view, for that reason, morality is purely personal. Many Americans, he insists, "nurture a vision of our country where one can not only make one's own important choices but where one can develop a sense of personal morality by making those choices." Rosenblatt believes that this vision encourages a heightened tolerance for conflict and ambiguity. It enables us to sustain competing claims without arbitrarily decid-

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ing for one or the other. To be sure, we pay the price of this independence and this singularity, as individuals and as a people; faced with a difficult issue like abortion, we turn away from the experience of other countries and turn inward to introspection. Still, for Rosenblatt, our self-searching, and the conflicts that it provokes, are preferable "to receiving a simplistic, doctrinaire word from a church or other authoritarian source, but it is a lot more difficult to deal with and only emphasizes the solitary nature of American citizenship." And it leaves us with the burden of our unutterable loneliness.

But the issue is not exactly authoritarianism. It is, rather, the scope of the moral. For pro-life advocates make a radical and interesting claim, and a claim precisely the opposite of what Rosenblatt is assuming: that the moral is *not* the personal, that important moral issues must be recognized as public matters. Do we leave murder, after all, to the disposition of private consciences? To recognize the fetus as "some form of person," they argue, and then to leave the termination of a pregnancy to the disposition of the individual conscience is effectively to endow individuals with the right to terminate life for personal convenience. And no amount of moral anguish on the part of the individual who makes the decision changes the outcome one bit.

In the confusion and the disagreement over which aspects of morality are public and which are private, neither side steps back to acknowledge that all life requires a social context. The pro-lifers rarely acknowledge that the dependence of a fetus on its mother for sustenance merely constitutes an extreme case of the dependence that binds each of us to others, who directly or indirectly contribute to our survival. And the emphasis of both sides on individual rights, whether those of women or those of fetuses, often deflects attention from our social interdependence and, accordingly, from the ways in which we are failing to define and to implement minimal social responsibilities toward women and children. (Perhaps the most chilling consequence of the insistence on a woman's individual right to abortion lies in the implication that the man who fathered her child has no stake in her decision, no right to participate in it. But then why should he contribute to its support, or even vote in favor of taxes to meet the needs of women and children?)

Rosenblatt is correct to recognize that the debate over abortion touches a host

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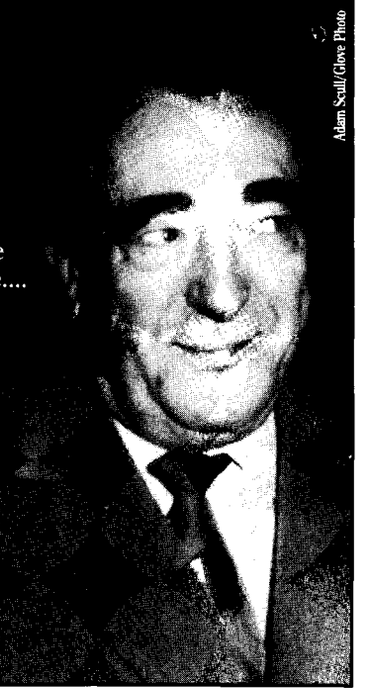
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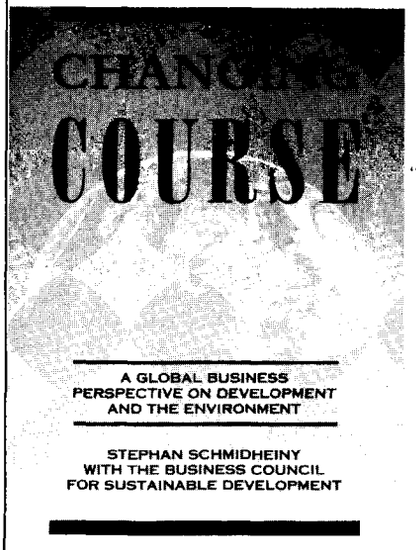
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of hotly contested issues, notably the role of women in the contemporary world, appropriate attitudes toward female sexuality, and the social support our society provides for mothers. At an accelerating rate in the twentieth century, women have been cut loose from the bonds and the supports that defined their "traditional" roles as wives and mothers. Married women—first childless women and then mothers—have entered the labor force in growing numbers. No-fault divorce has seriously eroded women's ability to count on male support for the rearing of children. Today roughly a third of American children are born to single women, and a much larger number spend some or most of their childhood in female-headed households. During the same period, but again at an accelerating rate since the 1960s, American society has undergone a "sexual revolution," fueled by changing mores that reflect, in part, dramatic improvements in contraception.

These developments have effectively combined to complicate our moral life, by blurring the distinction between public and private spheres that long figured so prominently in American ideology, if not always in American practice. The world of tiny one-family houses and snug families—the world that the pro-lifers cherish and sometimes romanticize—has succumbed to the triumph of a "post-modern" economy. Vestiges persist, of course, but the recent waves of unemployment suggest that they remain terrifyingly vulnerable to national and international economic fluctuations. Many pro-life women genuinely believe that the best protection for women lies in embracing the role of wife and mother and thereby obliging men to support them.

Ancient Optics

The grey Graeae —
Deino, Enyo, Pemphredo —
shared one eye,
but boasted two
"ae"s — ae ae.
If ae's could see
those three Graeae
need not have grieved.
But ancient Greece
was heavily into
fate and tragedy,
not therapy.
Even Tiresias's
sex-change operation was
permitted to
stall half-way through.

JOHN UPDIKE

It should not be necessary to dwell on the blindness that informs such a view. But surely there are no grounds for treating those who persist in it with fury. Quite the contrary. We need to demonstrate to women who, in defiance of the evidence, attempt to treat marriage and motherhood as careers that they are placing themselves and their children at high risk.

Pro-choicers, by contrast, have responded to economic change by insisting that women must be free to compete as unencumbered economic actors. But their notion of freedom depends primarily upon the liberation of women from the shackles that so recently bound them; and the broadside attack on male domination and sexual repression seems to be carrying them into an unfortunate attack on women's roles as mothers. The implicit logic of some pro-choicers seems to be that if men want women to be mothers, then women, to secure their own liberation, must want not to be mothers. Those who argue that pregnancy colonizes a woman's body and that concern for children is just another patriarchal swindle are rare, but many others, who speak more cautiously, accept the essentials of the argument.

It would be deceptive and misleading to jump from empirical observations of women's behavior to sweeping conclusions about some innate female propensity for nurture. Men can neither bear nor suckle children, but they can and do provide them with invaluable attention and, yes, nurture. Indeed, empirical evidence suggests that some men take as much satisfaction as women do from tending to their children. Unfortunately, a great many women and children do not live with any man at all, and under these conditions the assumption that "shared parenting" will redress social inequalities and psychological differences must be recognized as naive, or as the complacency of intellectuals, whose lives more easily permit such arrangements.

In the past, our values and our practices were reconciled by the assumption that women would devote themselves primarily to domestic life and its attendant non-contractual and non-competitive values, while men, who were presumed to provide individual women with economic support, would engage in the contractual and competitive practices of the capitalist market. In the real world, class inequalities frequently undermined this vision, but the painful exceptions did not destroy the ideal, which many working people in particular continued to cherish. Only within the last quarter century have the exceptions so increased as to swamp the ideal as a standard for practical policies. Today the mandate that women, most of whom must work, should also shoulder the burden of our humanity transforms the virtues of selfless devotion and sacrifice for others almost into the vice of masochism and self-immolation. No wonder that so many women are resisting.

Unfortunately, the rhetoric that justifies their most visible resistance accepts the most fatuous terms of the debate, namely that individual right supersedes the claims of interdependence and mutual responsibility. In insisting that the domestic responsibilities that have previously been ascribed to women—and in which many women have taken pleasure and pride—have become crippling burdens, the most vocal pro-choicers seem to be rejecting the values that women have been taken to embody. And in so doing, they are jeopardizing not merely the struggle for a decent future for our children, but also the seriousness with which we take the most vulnerable forms of life.

If the pro-choicers' reliance on the language of rights exposes the social blindness of their position, the anti-abortionists' reliance upon it exposes the tragedy of their own, and also the pitfalls of linking the future of women and children to nostalgia for a world that has passed beyond recall. Rosenblatt is right to say that we must find a way, as a people, to tolerate abortion even as we affirm our reluctance to perform it. But the basis for that tolerance cannot lie in the simultaneous acceptance of the fetus as some form of person and the affirmation of an individual's right to kill it. In an age in which neither science nor scripture are universally accepted as an absolute authority on the beginning of human life, it seems appropriate to settle for a social definition of life that respects, even if it does not precisely conform to, the beliefs of different groups.

As Rosenblatt suggests, few would dispute that the fetus constitutes some form of life. The real debate concerns what form of life. What purpose or value do we serve by acknowledging a fetus of one, two, or three months as a person or some form of person? Some people do view the fetus, from the very beginning, as a person, but most people probably do not, even if they do acknowledge it as a form of life. And we assuredly gain nothing at all by acknowledging it as a person *and* acknowledging a woman's individual right to kill it.

We need to recognize instead that

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American society generally acknowledges the fetus as a form of life but only considers it some form of person after a specific point in the pregnancy, probably three or four months. The implicit compromise would not satisfy everyone, but it would, at least, respect most people's sensibilities. It might also encourage us to move the discussion from a conflict between the rights of women and the rights of life to a recognition of the social context that supports life, for both women and babies. Abortion on demand will not solve the pervasive problems that plague too many American women. At most, an abortion frees a woman from the immediate threat of having to support a dependent being when she cannot, or can just barely, support herself.

While each side of this fierce debate believes in its own ideological virtue, there is evidence that each side is more flexible in practice than in principle. In Missouri, for example, pro-choice and pro-life supporters have worked together to help poor or desperate women to gain access to abortion, notwithstanding significant restrictions on counseling about and public funding for abortion. And neither side has taken this cooperation as a sign of compromise on matters of principle; each side has responded to the specific situations of specific women.

Such compromises are, in the end, not surprising at all. For most of us are reluctant to sacrifice vulnerable people whom we know personally on the altar of our own principles. Many of us know at least one liberal and ideologically committed father who has delighted in the grandchild that a young, unwed daughter has brought into his family—and frequently his home. Many of us know at least one pro-life parent who has helped a daughter secure an abortion, when having a baby threatened seriously to disrupt her life. Yet none of these cases axiomatically leads to a repudiation of pro-choice sensibilities, or to an embrace of abortion as the solution for a variety of social ills. Practical collaboration among people with opposing views can work if it is recognized as a form of philosophical coexistence, not the triumph of one set of principles over the other.

The rights of the fetus are worthless unless someone has the responsibility to care for it. Normally, individual women cannot meet that responsibility without some measure of social support. But the social support to meet the responsibility in turn implies that those who provide it also have some stake in the fetus and, hence, in the decision to abort or carry to term. In sum: we must finally agree that reproduction is *not* exclusively a private matter, that it cannot be completely accounted for in the language of individual rights.

Any social vision of reproduction must begin with an acknowledgment of the sanctity with which society endows human life and, accordingly, of the social commitment to support that life in all its diversity. Such a vision does not necessarily dictate the prohibition of abortion, especially in the earliest months. It does suggest, however, that the decision does not concern only the individual woman. Other industrialized nations that accept abortion in practice insist that some representatives of society or the woman's family must be consulted and must endorse her decision. Some also attempt to guarantee that every woman who finds herself willingly or unwillingly pregnant has access to social and medical support throughout her pregnancy; sufficient social support to provide for her child without infringing on her capacity to continue to function effectively in the world; or humane ways, as through adoption, to ensure a decent life for her child independent of her.

The virtue of such policies lies not in their prohibition of abortion, but in their casting of it as a last, not a first, resort. More important, such policies do much to minimize the importance of a woman's economic deprivation in her decision to have an abortion. In effect, such abortion policies announce a social commitment to the support of children, and they reassure the woman who is seeking an abortion for reasons of economic circumstance that she does indeed have a choice. It is a particularly cruel irony of contemporary liberalism that the defense of abortion as a woman's individual right amounts to an acceptance of conditions that deprive her of a real choice.

ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE is Eleonore Raoul Professor of the Humanities and Professor of History at Emory University and the author of *Feminism Without Illusions: A Critique of Individualism* (University of North Carolina Press).

Romance and Race

BY ANN HULBERT

Jazz
by Toni Morrison

(Knopf, 229 pp., $21)

Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination
by Toni Morrison

(Harvard University Press, 92 pp., $14.95)

Toni Morrison is the compleat black American writer. She has the rare distinction in our balkanized cultural landscape of being both academically and popularly canonized: her books claim a high place on college reading lists as well as on best-seller lists; she holds a prestigious professorship at Princeton University, and is a prominent spokeswoman on racial questions, large and small. Now, in her sixth novel and her first book of criticism, a series of lectures about American literature that she recently delivered at Harvard, she has evidently set out to do what such well-established authorities rarely dare: change her mind and some of her methods.

Morrison the critic, whose indictments of what she has termed "whitemale" culture have been extreme, here steps forth as an apolitical, anachronistic scholar. She declares herself committed to patiently exploring the white imaginative perspective. In fact, from the project that she outlines in *Playing in the Dark*, you wouldn't guess that she is ensconced at the forefront of the politically correct, multicultural academy. She maintains that her colleagues in literature departments simply refuse to address race in their readings of the works that have shaped American culture and identity. And she promises that the study she urges of "the Africanist presence" in those works offers a non-ideological opportunity "to

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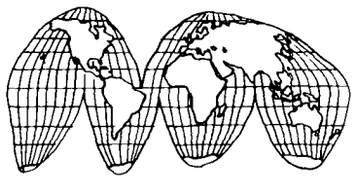

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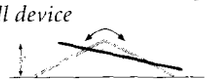

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comprehend the resilience and gravity, the inadequacy and the force of the imaginative act." The fruit of such an endeavor, she announces, "is delight, not disappointment." Rather than a call to subvert the canon, it is a reminder of "the treasure trove that American literature is." The old-fashioned celebratory tone is disorienting. What country, which decade, are we in?

In *Jazz*, there's no need to ask either question. We are in Harlem in the mid-1920s, eavesdropping on an unhappy triangle involving a middle-aged couple, Joe and Violet Trace, and Joe's 18-year-old lover, Dorcas. But the novel, which is narrated by an obtrusively mysterious voice, poses another question: Who is talking? What authority lies behind this intimate portrait of a black community at the height of the black cultural renaissance of the Jazz Age? As if Morrison's aim of tolerantly exploring white writers' depictions of blackness weren't unexpected enough, her novel embarks on what looks like the ultimate mission of self-sabotage: she is questioning a black writer's efforts to penetrate the heart of a black world.

Morrison is determined to shake up not just her readers, it seems, but also herself. She intends to challenge our assumptions about race and literature, and to question her own instincts, which she admits tend toward "romanticizing blackness" and "vilifying whiteness." In both books, a self-conscious effort at sympathetic examination confronts a reflexive impulse to portray exploiters and victims. The struggle sometimes looks like genuine self-division, sometimes like a strategy to have it both ways. But it rarely bears much resemblance to the daring iconoclasm that Morrison aspires to offer.

Her critical project is most notable, in fact, for being highly derivative. What heresy it contains lies in its lack of originality: Morrison's real accomplishment is to recall, without acknowledging it, the work of the true pioneers who first approached questions about race and imagination with urgency and rigorous open-mindedness. Those predecessors are a hard act to follow, which is perhaps part of the reason that they don't figure in her lectures. In an essay in *The New Negro* (1925), the definitive anthology of the Harlem Renaissance, the black poet and critic William Stanley Braithwaite predicted that "The Negro in American Literature," as he titled his piece, would prove a "magnificent theme" for the literary historian:

> It will be magnificent not because there is any sharp emergence of character or incidents, but because of the immense paradox of racial life which came up thunderingly against the principles and doctrines of democracy, and put them to the severest test that they had known.

Ralph Ellison took up the theme in "Twentieth-Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity," an essay written in 1946 and published in 1953, and he made clear, in terms remarkably similar to Morrison's, that he was not interested in compiling a catalog of white stereotypes of blacks. He elevated the figure of the black to a more important role than manipulated victim: he was the essential "other" in relation to whom American character and American ideas of freedom and individualism were defined and greatly complicated. "I propose that we view the whole of American life as a drama acted out upon the body of a Negro giant, who, lying trussed up like Gulliver, forms the stage and the scene upon which and within which the action unfolds." Ellison set out not to attack the distortions in the portraiture of blacks, but to examine them as clues to the dilemma of the white imagination, "the dilemma arising between his democratic beliefs and certain anti-democratic practices."

Some thirty years after Ellison's piece, treatments of race in American literature had become the cutting edge of scholarship. But you would never guess it from Morrison, who inexplicably laments that on campus "the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture." In fact, plenty of professors have aggressively scrutinized the racial attitudes of Faulkner, Melville, Poe, Twain, Hemingway, and others. To take just one current and rather mainstream example, Joan Dayan's essay "Romance and Race" in *The Columbia History of the American Novel* (1991) covers much the same ground that Morrison claims to explore for the first time, down to discussing, in much the same terms, the same passage about "whiteness" in Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.

At first Morrison's blissful ignorance of the politicized academic climate is refreshing. It inspires her to convey a crusading excitement and inclusiveness about her undertaking—not exactly staples of scholarship these days. Where other contemporary critics have inclined toward self-conscious theorizing and political posturing—countering the New Critical reading of Faulkner as a defender of Southern community, for example, with a portrait of Faulkner as

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politically correct spokesman for the oppressed—Morrison sounds eloquent and free of theoretical baggage. She emphasizes that she is a writer, reading from the inside, not a critic applying interpretive preconceptions; she expects to find ambiguity, not ideology, in serious American fiction.

Morrison's willingness to approach the literary imagination with awe, rather than with an ax to grind, is on display in the first section of the book, where she introduces her enterprise. Following Ellison, she explains that what she labels "American Africanism," the literary fabrication of black figures and associations, "provides a way of contemplating chaos and civilization, desire and fear, and a mechanism for testing the problems and blessings of freedom." Her assumption is that this experiment in "entering what one is estranged from" is mostly a liberating challenge to the ideology of "whiteness."

The result, she announces, is "an astonishing revelation of longing, of terror, of perplexity, of shame, of magnanimity." She finds all of those responses in Willa Cather's efforts to probe the "power and license" of a white mistress over her slave in *Sapphira and the Slave Girl.* What have generally been regarded as problems in the novel she usefully reads as clues to Cather's attempt to understand the precariousness of white female identity.

But as the lectures proceed, Morrison's spirit of patient exploration wears thinner. Having assured us at the outset that, "Yes, I wanted to identify those moments when American literature was complicit in the fabrication of racism, but equally important, I wanted to see when literature exploded and undermined it," she becomes more intent on indictment. As she outlines "some topics that need critical investigation," Morrison the subtle reader is often overwhelmed by a doctrinaire interrogator.

As long as she's speaking in generalities—which she does frequently and repetitiously—Morrison manages to maintain her air of literary curiosity. But the social adversary takes over when she breaks down her sweeping enterprise into more specific critical projects. The first three of her four rather arbitrarily divided topics sound like reductive efforts to demonstrate literature's complicity in crude racism: a consideration of the "Africanist character as surrogate and enabler," of the "way an Africanist idiom is used to establish difference," and of the "ways in which an Africanist character is used to limn out and enforce the invention and implica-

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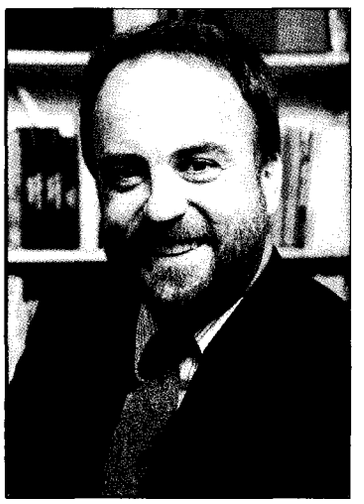

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tions of whiteness." Those "astonishing revelations" of white ambivalence that Morrison welcomed at first have now vanished. Instead black figures have become tools of a thoroughly unmodulated ideology of white superiority:

> Africanism is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny.

As if slightly taken aback at her own rising rhetoric, Morrison formulates her fourth topic in her more general and generous vein, resisting the easy temptation to vilify whiteness. Once again she proposes a subtler examination of the Africanist narrative "as a means of meditation—both safe and risky—on one's own humanity," an opportunity "to contemplate limitation, suffering, rebellion, and to speculate on fate and destiny." But even such meditations have a way of getting simplified, as it becomes clear when Morrison turns to a particular text, in this instance *Huckleberry Finn*.

Morrison's contribution to the debate over the perplexing ending of Twain's book, when Jim is subjected to mock liberation and captivity at the instigation of Tom Sawyer, shows her divided instincts at work. She calls for a "close examination of the interdependence of slavery and freedom" in the novel, as if it had never been done, but her own assessment is sweeping, not subtle. According to her reading, the book is about "the parasitical nature of *white* freedom" (my emphasis); the lesson is that "neither Huck nor Mark Twain can tolerate, in imaginative terms, Jim freed.... Freedom has no meaning to Huck or to the text without the specter of enslavement."

But this is to miss Twain's more ambitious scrutiny of freedom, and to skirt tensions that Ellison, to take one example, carefully examined. Jim, Ellison observed, "is not simply a slave but a symbol of humanity ... a man ... who expressed his essential humanity in his desire for freedom," and Huck, like Jim, "is limited in circumstance but not in possibility." Whatever the inadequacies of the end, Twain had confronted the real tragedy of American life in having Huck simultaneously internalize and rebel against the racial assumptions of his society. Trapped by the parasitical nature of white freedom, he nonetheless had a larger vision of freedom; at the same time that he decided not to report on runaway Jim, he assumed that he would go to hell for it.

This muddled but moral sense of responsibility, Ellison believed, was at the heart of the best literary confrontations with race. Still, he emphasized in closing that his essay was not a plea to white writers to define black humanity; it was a call to them "to recognize the broader aspects of their own." Morrison ostensibly shares that aim, which she invokes over and over. But as her ambivalent lectures unfold, it yields again and again to the less imaginative urge simply to indict white writers for their inhumanity.

Defining black humanity, Ellison reminded his readers, is a task that belongs to black writers, who face "the responsibility of having their ideals and images recognized as part of the composite image which is that of the still forming American people." With great energy and success, Morrison has for two decades shouldered that responsibility. In *Playing in the Dark*, she characterizes the dilemma of the black writer as a burdensome variation on the predicament of the white writers she examines in her lectures. They have unconsciously assumed an "unraced" audience; she is "a black author who is at some level *always* conscious of representing one's own race to, or in spite of, a race of readers that understands itself to be 'universal' or race-free." In *Jazz*, she explores that situation and its difficulties more self-consciously than ever before.

Unlike Morrison the critic, who is eager to declare her aloofness from academic political fashion, Morrison the novelist works hard to demonstrate her awareness of the current preoccupation with textual "signs" and narrative indeterminacy. The epigraph of *Jazz*, though it comes from the ancient Gnostic Gospels, echoes the terms of reigning critical discourse: "I am the name of the sound / and the sound of the name. / I am the sign of the letter / and the designation of the division." This immodest incantation is the first, none too subtle nudge to be skeptical about the claims of imaginative prowess made by the novel's garrulous narrative "I" (whose identity, the jacket flap informs us, "is a matter of each reader's imagination").

Morrison's narratives have usually been supremely confident. At her best, as in *Song of Solomon*, she imagines her way with seeming effortlessness into the most obscure corners and eccentric souls of the rural or small-town black worlds that she maps in abundant detail. She then intertwines her discoveries in plots that trace her protagonists' quests for self-understanding. Her explorations in empathy, she has said, are meant to be invitations to white readers to undertake their own: "To read imaginative literature by and about us is to choose to examine centers of the self and to have the opportunity to compare those centers with the 'raceless' ones with which we are, all of us, most familiar."

In *Jazz*, however, she has evidently decided to challenge her readers with a less penetrable story. She wants to [redacted] expectations of anything like a linear narrative, and to raise doubts about the possibility of imaginative empathy. This novel is not supposed to be a romanticized, well-rounded portrait of black tribulations, and the blues are Morrison's guide to the rawer, less symmetrical chronicle that she aims to offer instead. As she observed in an essay four years ago, "A modernity which overturns pre-war definitions ushers in the Jazz Age (an age *defined* by Afro-American art and culture), and requires new kinds of intelligences to define oneself." Efforts to shape identity became newly "complex, contradictory, evasive, independent, liquid."

Yet Morrison's riffs on her disoriented characters have a way of ending up flat and faint, even when the opening notes are true. The improvisatory course of a jam session is the evident model for the gnomic narrator who recounts Joe Trace's affair with teenaged Dorcas, its fatal end (Joe hunts her down in a club with another boyfriend and kills her), and Violet and Joe's bewildered recovery of balance. But the performance is almost too predictably meandering: now coolly surveying, as if from above the rooftops, the Harlem of the 1920s where the story is set; now intimately swooping in to report on characters' lives and thoughts; now rushing the rhythm to anticipate events that have not yet transpired; now slowing down to circle back and cover the ground again, and then to dip dreamily even further back to the past and the South in an effort to explain why violence erupts in the Traces' lives in the City in 1926.

What starts out lyrical quickly becomes labored. In particular, the bird's-eye view celebrations of the [redacted] tempo and daring temper of black life in Harlem during the Jazz Age have a tendency to lapse into cliché. "I'm crazy about this City," the narrator exults, and then proceeds to slip from picturesque images into platitudes: "Below is shadow where any blasé thing takes place: clarinets and lovemaking, fists and the voices of sorrowful women. A city like this one makes me dream tall and feel in on things. Hep." Similarly, the vignettes of Southern life around the turn of the century, for all their fresh details,

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verge on the formulaic—people dreaming small and feeling out of things.

Against these rural and urban backdrops, the characters in *Jazz* struggle to define themselves in all their complex, contradictory, evasive, independent, liquid selfhood, only to end up seeming one-dimensional. The outlines of Joe and Violet's story at first suggest a predictable drama of brutalizing black man and brutalized black women. Both protagonists, and Dorcas as well, have known the devastating jolt of dispossession that is the familiar legacy of Morrison's characters: Joe the crushing rejection of him by his wild mother; Violet the suicide of her mother and the unsteady loyalty of her grandmother; Dorcas the death of both her parents in riots in East St. Louis.

Yet Morrison clearly intends to make them more than mere victims at the mercy of a cruel world. The trouble is that her efforts to endow her characters with will become steadily more willful and intrusive as the novel progresses. Idiosyncratic motives are scattered in the digressive narrative, but they're rarely developed, and in the end the characters are barely more than sketchy stereotypes. Quiet Joe, a door-to-door salesman of cosmetics, at first seems stirred up by complicated memories, but finally he's little more than a man with a midlife crisis, who's briefly deranged by jealousy.

Similarly, the maternal longings that lurk in Violet's obsessive thoughts of young Dorcas (whose corpse she tried to stab during the funeral), and of the daughter she wishes she had, are left dangling. Instead, we swerve off into a long account of her grandmother's obsession with the golden-haired boy she raised, which reads like an old-fashioned fairy tale. And there's a pat modern coming-of-age story in the orphan Dorcas's discovery of large and selfish appetites despite the admonitions of her straightlaced aunt: the girl is another rebel with the customary cause—hormones and "the dirty, get-on-down music the women sang and the men played and both danced to, close and shameless or apart and wild."

At the end of the novel Morrison resorts to the most heavy-handed device to liberate her characters from predictability. The implication, carefully fostered from the outset, has been that Dorcas's murder will be followed by another act of violence; the suspense of the wandering story has consisted in guessing who will end up killing whom. But Morrison instead stages a manipulative about-face in the plot: Joe and Violet end up living happily ever after in a new and calm intimacy born of their troubles. The narrative voice confesses that it is to blame for failing to foresee the unexpectedly anti-climactic turn of events:

> I was sure one would kill the other. I waited for it so I could describe it. I was so sure it would happen. That the past was an abused record with no choice but to repeat itself at the crack and no power on earth could lift the arm that held the needle. I was so sure, and they danced and walked all over me. Busy, they were, busy being original, complicated, changeable—human, I guess you'd say, while I was the predictable one, confused in my solitude into arrogance, thinking my space, my view was the only one that was or that mattered.

The mistake has been to overdramatize and to trust in an imagination that has conceived the world and the characters too broadly and luridly: "What, I wonder, what would I be without a few brilliant spots of blood to ponder?" the narrator muses, "Without aching words that set, then miss, the mark?"

Morrison has charged her narrator with the duty to avoid the weakness that she herself has acknowledged—an inclination to romanticize black lives. But it's a warning that the presiding voice heeds too late, admitting in closing that "it was loving the City that distracted me and gave me ideas. Made me think I could speak its loud voice and make that sound sound human. I missed the people altogether." The verdict is uncomfortably close to the mark, and the fact that the narrator renders it and then ruminates at some length about the many obstacles to sympathy doesn't retroactively deepen the characters or tighten the plot.

Nor does the final confession of self-doubt really succeed in deromanticizing the portrait. Morrison has very purposefully veered away from a saga of melodramatic suffering, but the novel ends up arriving at sentimentality by a different route. Instead of a bitter cycle of pain, readers are presented a sugary tableau of peace between Joe and Violet: "They eat breakfast then and, more often than not, fall asleep.... The rest of the day goes however they want it to. After a hairdressing, for example, he meets her at the drugstore for her vanilla malt and his cherry smash."

In the preface to *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison emphasizes what her novel and lectures make abundantly clear: that an acute self-consciousness unites her fiction and her criticism.

> Writing and reading are not all that distinct for a writer. Both exercises require being alert and ready for unaccountable beauty,

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for the intricateness or simple elegance of the writer's imagination, for the world that imagination evokes. Both require being mindful of the places where imagination sabotages itself, locks its own gates, pollutes its vision. Writing and reading mean being aware of the writer's notions of risk and safety, the serene achievement of, or sweaty fight for, meaning and response-ability.

It can indeed seem the height of responsibility to pursue "response-ability" so assiduously, especially when dealing with matters of race and literature. But Morrison's new books suggest that perhaps it is possible to be too mindful of the ways of the imagination, too intent on demystifying it—scrutinizing, assessing, and second-guessing. Her relentless vigilance, rather than issuing in creative sympathy, leads her toward the double dead end of indicting other writers for failures of vision and apologizing for her own. •

Southern Breeze

BY SVEN BIRKERTS

Sportsman's Paradise by Nancy Lemann

(Knopf, 224 pp., $20)

In 1985 Nancy Lemann published *Lives of the Saints*, a beguiling and deceptively light novel that tracked the emotional maelstroms precipitated in the life of her heroine, Louise, by an incorrigibly dissolute young man named Claude Collier. Louise was recently returned to New Orleans after four years of college in the inhospitable East. Now she was again free to go swooning about in her city of dreams and ardors. Through long afternoons and booze-drenched evenings, she wrote the fever chart of her feelings for Claude. Lemann found a way to forge a voice that combined drop-dead wryness with an unapologetic romantic susceptibility. The novel was a triumph of tone:

> Claude went over to the dance floor and accidentally knocked over a waitress with a tray of drinks. They went sprawling toward the floor together when he tried to help her up. Then he tried to make a big joke out of it. He appeared to be deteriorating. He was drinking an untold amount of gin and seemed on the brink of decrepitude. But unaccountably, though a man like that will always seem on the brink of decrepitude, he will never go over the brink to decrepitude, not quite. Instead, he has a curious freshness, a curiously upright posture, he is a total enigma, with that formal stiff upright posture. In him you will find at 50, say, the rare vitality of one blue-eyed 50-year-old man with a bow tie that is in itself one sight enough to make life worth living.

Here we see not only Lemann's signature style—rambling and recursive, but also affectively pointed—but something of her fictional posture as well. She adores her suffering, stoically genteel South and the men who represent it.

It is hard not to read Lemann's follow-up novel, *Sportsman's Paradise*, as a continuation of Louise's story. For though the narrator is now a thirtyish young woman named Storey Collier, and though the setting is a tiny summer enclave on Long Island called Orient Point, the saga goes on—indeed, goes on without dropping so much as a single prose stitch. Claude Collier, Storey's cousin, is himself a bit player (he makes an appearance at the end after spending most of the novel in a rehabilitation clinic in New Orleans). Moreover, the denizens of this eccentric retreat are most of them members of the milieu of the first book.

The enclave itself is owned by Grace Fox, a Mississippi matriarch of 60. Since her husband, Constant, a legendary newspaper editor, is always off traveling, she presides over the sprawl of friends and kin. There is Hobby Fox, a nephew, who is now "World Editor" of the *New York Examiner*. And the irascible Mr. Underwood, his boss (and Storey's), who roars in on weekends from the city. A small army of others hovers in a kind of gnat flux at the margins of any and every scene, and includes Claude Collier's three children, removed from the site of their father's disgrace and minded by Storey and others; a disaster-prone young woman named Margaret who seems to capsize every boat she gets near; and various drinkers, sports, and old-timers.

Such quick identification cannot begin to suggest the incestuousness of the ambience—one begins to believe that all Southerners are at least cousins—that Lemann manipulates shrewdly to create an ever shifting backdrop to her few central players. For the reader the experience is not unlike watching one of those high-society films from the late '30s, in which drunken uncles and debutantes are forever colliding over the canapes. Mercifully, I don't think that we are expected to keep all of the names and relationships straight, no more than if we had blundered in for the weekend ourselves.

Nor is the plot much more articulated than the social mise-en-scène. The summer days pass, made dreamy by the prospect of distant boats on the bay (Margaret is surely toppling out of one or another of them), by Hobby's radio, turned low to perpetual baseball, by the cocktail chatter from the shady spots on the lawn. Mr. Underwood storms by in one of his manic states; 3-year-old Al Collier is pestering Storey with his incessant questions about the world around him; a pair of amorous newlyweds is sneaking off to make love in the laundry room.

Gradually, though, and quite delicately, Lemann teases forth the dominant motif, that element that must exist if these other whimsical detailings are to gather any mass. And this half-hidden but subtly active nerve is the relationship between Storey and Hobby. From the start we are aware that she is transfixed by his distant and taciturn presence. Then, midway through the novel, as Storey reflects for the umpteenth time on his character, she also hands us one end of what proves to be a hopelessly tangled thread:

> I think that Hobby has an elaborate series of manners built up to maintain his stalwart demeanor, a kind of repression in fact, as though if he let down any one element of reserve then the whole thing would crumble—which I am waiting for it to do. For he and I had left something behind, in a seedy dive in Baton Rouge while covering the legislature and the old sinner, or on a stormy night in Biloxi, Mississippi, or at an old hotel off the coast of Alabama, all before he blew out of town one night in a seersucker suit on a midnight flight from New Orleans. My story starts in Orient, tame Orient, but pursues ever to the South, to the green palms on a raging sea. For I had left a part of myself—and there it must remain.

But while we are thus alerted to Storey's true state and led perhaps to expect that the romance will reignite, Lemann does not pass along conventional sorts of gratification. The tensing strand of Storey's doubt and nostalgia and yearn-

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ing remains intact, neither slackening nor snapping. The summer extends itself, its procession of visitors ever renewed, its charming but decisively secondary interludes brightening page after page. Only at the end do we heed the encroaching of autumn, but even then the radio chatters the soothing litanies of baseball.

But never mind the plot, and never mind any plumbing of character or motivation. Lemann's work is only glancingly about either. Its real point—and triumph—is its registration of sensibility. Of emotional susceptibility. *Sportsman's Paradise* (the tag on Louisiana license plates) is, like *Lives of the Saints* before it, a vast exhalation of romantic yearning. Which is just another way of saying that it is filled to spilling with old-fashioned—and culturally unfashionable—sentiments and stances.

Storey is a young woman living in our times, but she is defiantly not *of* our times. She cherishes the manners and rituals of the Old South, pledging herself to a proud and helpless nostalgia for attitudes that are at the point of vanishing. She is made knock-kneed by gruff old roués, by silver-haired gents who drink bourbon and relive old hunting adventures; she seems to love everything about the good ol' boy ethos. Hobby, she says, "had an old-fashioned air, of the South, after all. And thus he had the air of someone who has led another life. Seeming rather wry—courtly and windblown and stoic—he proceeded to the sports page ..." Staring at the elderly drinkers on the lawn, she muses that "they represent to me a courtly world. I am enraptured by their glamour." Even the absent Constant comes in for his meed of adoration:

> And I of course am the type of person who treasures the mere examples of his handwriting when she gets his letters, and packs them if she goes on a trip. People in life will often tell you not to have hero worship. Don't let them. If you worship the ground someone walks on, then go ahead and do so.... It is the world's dark magic, which as I have concluded, is the only thing.

Dark magic, then, is what Storey is in thrall to, and if this leads her to go around batting her eyelashes and sighing, so be it. Lemann has bought her a place in our world and she can do and say what she damn pleases. After all, the point of writing is not to create anyone's idea of a right-thinking person, but to open up pockets in which we can dream our lives in other directions. This Nancy Lemann has done. Her wonderfully rhythmic, off-center prose installs the reader squarely inside the life of a foolish, obsessive, but emotionally forthright young woman. Storey's quaint devotions set her apart from her fictional peers. But like it or not, she is who she is, queen of her scattershot dreams.

SVEN BIRKERTS's *American Energies: Essays on Fiction* will be published in June by Morrow.

TRB *continued from page 4*

teria choices don't seem so incoherent to me. Or at least, they disconcertingly resemble my own.

Above all, Perot is the only presidential candidate who is emphasizing the most important issue. That is the deficit, broadly defined to mean our general failure to invest in the future as well as the federal budget gap itself. Perot is not completely honest about how he would close the gap. He babbles about "waste and abuse" like a pro. But he is more forthright than his rivals in calling for curbs on entitlement payments to the affluent and for an end to the military subsidy of Europe and Japan. And he is reasonably straight about saying that if the citizenry finds serious spending cuts indigestible, higher taxes are the only alternative.

Perot is pro-choice on abortion, live-and-let-live on gay rights and other questions of lifestyle freedom, pro-gun control. On foreign policy he opposed the Gulf war but supports aid to the former Soviet Union. He thinks that growing income inequality is socially unhealthy and favors a heavier tax burden on the rich like himself. He is obviously "pro-business," but whether this means a belief in free markets or some corporate-statist vision of government subsidies and protectionism is not clear.

This set of views may be less ideologically coherent than those of Karl Marx or Milton Friedman. But they do not suffer much in that respect compared with George Bush or Bill Clinton. I detect no gaping inconsistencies.

Nor does it seem fair to charge Perot with vagueness. It's true he has not prepared eighteen-point position papers on various topics like Clinton and, selectively, Bush. And he is clearly benefiting in the opinion polls from a fairy-godmother syndrome: the hope, masquerading as a belief, that someone will come along with a magic wand and wave away all our problems. But Perot himself has been slightly better than Clinton and miles ahead of Bush in conveying the essential message of no gain without pain.

I wouldn't vote for Ross Perot over Bill Clinton. But I'd vote for him in two seconds over George Bush. And if I lived in a state where Perot could win but Clinton couldn't, I'd vote strategically. Others will vote for Perot in the spirit of, "Let's take a flier. What have we got to lose?" That's a sentiment deserving of sympathy, if not total respect.

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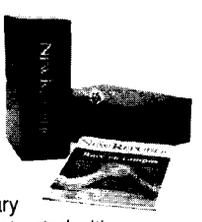

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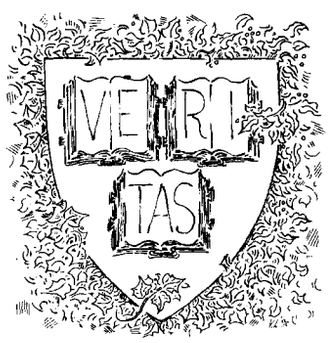
CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Sacred condoms

IT IS NOW MORE THAN FORTY years since the then president of Harvard, Nathan Marsh Pusey, undertook to revive the university's divinity school. He provoked some foreboding in doing so, not least among the local Brahmins who, though they probably thought of themselves as Unitarians, Congregationalists, or Episcopalians, did not think these designations had much to do with faith. Today they can rest soundly in their graves. The divines have long since lost whatever God they once had and found politics instead. By now there are no institutions more p.c. than those that train ministers for service in the mainstream Protestant creeds. No longer interested in helping their congregants through fear and trembling, for a decade they told them what to think about Sandinismo and the bomb. All this was made quite irrelevant by a democratic process that the "concerned clergy" hardly noticed. But they had learned again the habits of doctrinal absolutism, the central tenet of which is "anything goes."

WHICH IS WHY I WASN'T AT ALL surprised to find that the div school was hosting an exhibit called "Sacred Condoms." Here's *The Boston Globe*'s analysis: "Some artists work with plants, others with clay and bronze. Artist Karen Norberg works with condoms.... The tabletop exhibit features dolls dressed up in condom rainwear. Some condoms are filled with honey, others with alphabet soup. Other condoms are tricked out with Navaho beads and rabbit's foot fur." The rabbit's foot fur may be for good luck, I suppose, in case the condom breaks. The folks who put on this latex-lambskin spectacular don't, however, seem to agree on its purpose. According to the *Globe*, Ms. Norberg says it is "to promote safe sex through what might be called unsafe art." But a representative of the school told AP that "we're really hoping that this doesn't turn into a huge public event." So if it wasn't supposed to attract many visitors, how was it going to promote safe sex? By the way, this was the second time around for "Sacred Condoms" in Cambridge: last year it had a stint at the Episcopal Divinity School. Apparently neither show was financed by the National Endowment for the Arts.

I'M TEACHING A CLASS THIS TERM on "Nationalism, Separatism, and Group Conflict in Our Time," a course not unlike one I taught for some years with Nathan Glazer. After our last session in 1989 Glazer and I confessed to each other there were times we didn't say exactly what we thought on issues of race in America. We could be misunderstood, we'd sound too pessimistic. So we self-censored, and I did a little of that this semester as well. It may no longer be necessary. Black intellectuals like Stephen Carter, Shelby Steele, Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Stanley Crouch have performed an important public service by clearing the air with simple truth-telling. Even the liberal political class—better late than never—seems about to be emancipated from the tyranny of false clichés. First it was my senator, John Kerry, who, with a stark speech at Yale, gave public voice to many of his constituents, aggrieved by affirmative action programs that reward according to ascription rather than attainment—and do little for the truly disadvantaged besides. Then it was Bill Bradley's turn. He'd contented himself for months with throwing Willie Horton back in George Bush's face. Cheap partisan talk: no courage in it, and no analysis either. Whatever else he may have to answer for, Bush is not responsible for the stereotypes of the black underclass. As a result of its behavior, said Bradley, whites believe the underclass guarantees its own isolation and the stigmatization of other blacks with jobs and families. Many American cities are dying because hefty proportions of their populations don't work at anything but crime. Before we'll be able to do anything about this, we'll have to acknowledge the facts.



THE FACTS AREN'T HARD TO COME by. In mid-April the national press reported on a study that found that on any given day last year in D.C. 42 percent of black men between 18 and 35 were enmeshed with the criminal justice system. Fifteen percent were in jail, 21 percent on probation or parole, and 6 percent free on bail or with warrants out seeking their arrest. These statistics bear out an earlier study that found that, nationwide, one out of four black men between 20 and 29 are in prison or recently out. A few days later *The Boston Globe* gave an account of a Massachusetts survey that confirmed what everybody already knew: blacks fare worse than whites in disease and mortality. "Black males are murdered at fourteen times the rate of white males, black infants die before their first birthday at nearly three times the rate of white infants." The article quoted someone as saying, "This is outrageous ... public and private agencies have neglected the needs of low-income and minority people." There was no mention of something more salient: crime and drugs and families headed by mothers who should themselves still be being mothered. The *Globe*, of course, couldn't bring itself to mention this context, one that even a clinic at every street-corner would do little to help.

THE CONTEXT WAS ALSO ABSENT from a recent *New York Times* article about the paucity of black Ph.D.s. In 1990 a total of 36,027 Ph.D.s were awarded by American universities. Of these 320—less than 1 percent—were bestowed on black men and 506—more than 1 percent—went to black women. There were no black doctorates in applied mathematics, philosophy, molecular biology, small particle physics, biophysics, geology. Other cutting-edge fields counted one or two. What the article didn't report is that roughly half the black doctorates were in education—a not exactly rigorous field. The *Times* reporter, Anthony De Palma, fixed on a new theme by way of explaining the scarcity of black academics: the universities were supporting foreign graduate students instead (read Asians). This nativist canard would be unthinkable at the *Times* were it not in the service of what is wrongly perceived as the black cause. The idea that there are legions of black students just waiting to undertake graduate study—especially in the sciences—if their way were not impeded by foreigners is preposterous. How many black undergraduates major in the sciences? And in other fields that lead to exacting graduate work? How well do black seniors do on the relevant Graduate Record Exams? Of this, not a word in the *Times*.

A 1989 REPORT BY THE NATIONAL Research Council shows that only 26 percent of black teachers in California taking a basic skills test in 1982-83 passed it; black teachers taking a similar exam in Texas had a pass rate of 10 percent. Maybe the numbers have gone up in the last decade. I hope so. The grim choice faced by most schools in the future will be to employ either teachers who aren't black or blacks who aren't teachers.

MARTIN PERETZ

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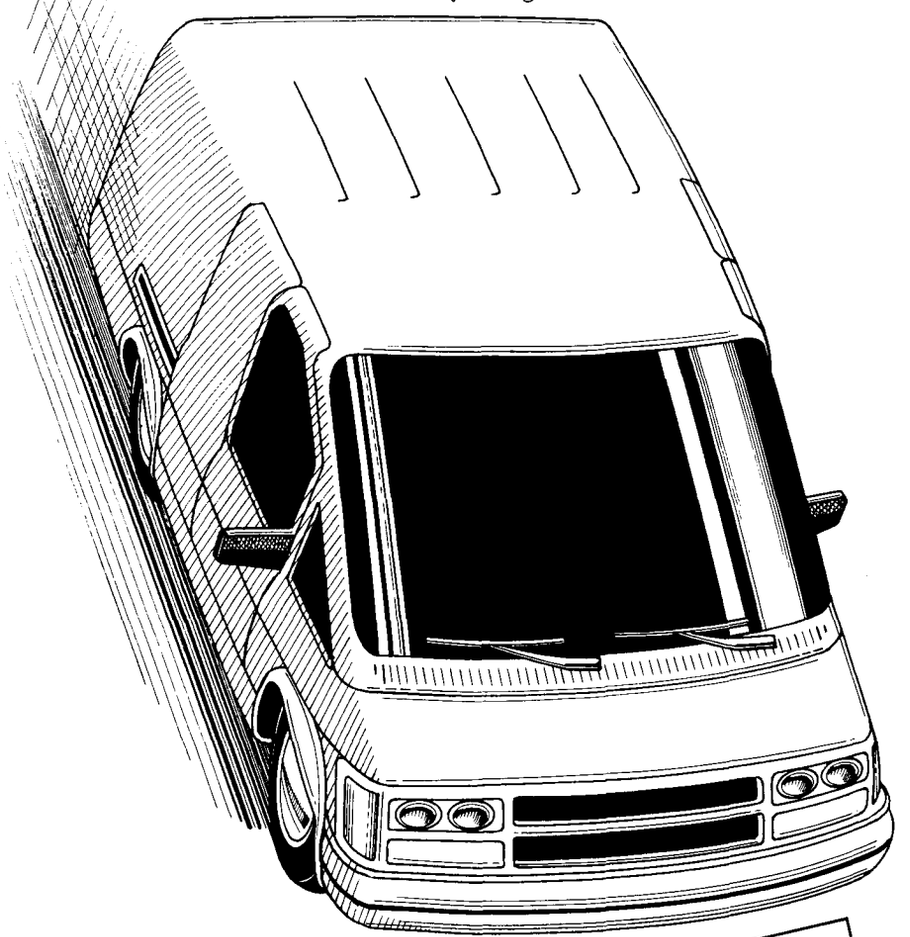

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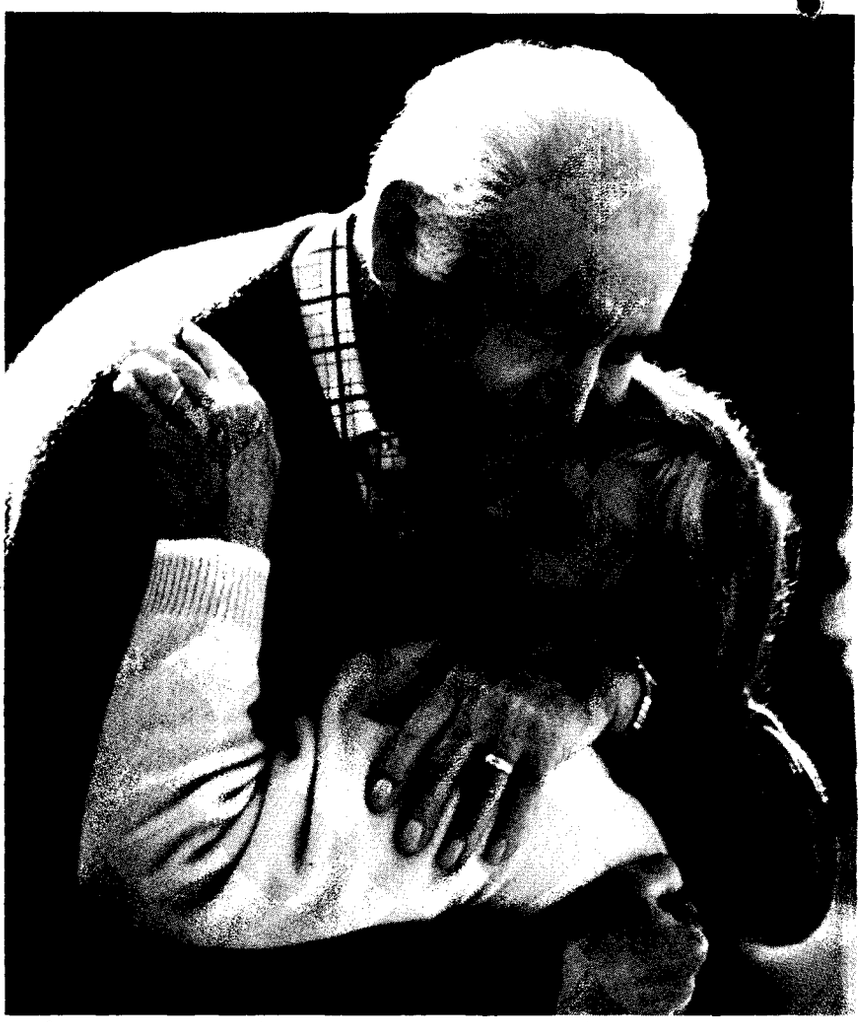

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